

Band contacts

7th Child, Flat 4, 6 Summerhill Road, Dartford, Kent, England, DA1 2LP, UK.
54th, PO Box 5149, Northampton, England, UK, NN2 6ZA. <http://website.lineone.net/~54th>
Abaddon Incarnate, c/o Seasons of Mist
Arcane Sun, c/o Paul Kearns, 95 St Declan's Rd, Marino, Dublin 3, Republic of Ireland.
Bal Sagoth, c/o Byron, 27 Main Road, Usherwood, Wharnccliffe Side, Sheffield, South Yorks, England, S30 3DP, UK.
Cathedral, c/o Earache Records.
Dag Mora, c/o Endgame Management, 32 Balmalloch Road, Kilsyth, Glasgow, Scotland, G65 9NH, UK.
Dreamsfear, PO Box 6508, Phibsboro, Dublin 7, Ireland.
<http://members.tripod.com/~dreamsfear/index.html>
Dying Sun, Graeme Duff, 17 Falkland Avenue, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, Scotland, UK, G77 5DR.
Enchanted, The, c/o Sinister Realms, PO Box 406, Bradford, West Yorks, BD7 1XY, England, UK.
Entombed, c/o Music For Nations
Entwined, PO Box XII, Stanway, Colchester, England, CO3 5WB, UK.
Epoch, c/o Jason Barriskill, 35 Whitesideshill, Ballyworkan, Portadown, Northern Ireland, BT62 3RJ, UK.
Ewigkeit, c/o James Fogarty, 8 New port Street, Brighton, East Sussex, England, BN2 3HL, UK.
Excarnated, PO Box 5407, Mordialloc, 3195, Vic, Australia.
Highroad No. 28, c/o Andrew Cantwell, PO Box 502, Parramatta, NSW, Australia, 2124.
Manifest, John Rankin, Castletown Mount, Dundalk, Co. Louth, Ireland or Damien Kenny, 6 Jocelyn Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth, Ireland.
Meads of Asphodel, the, c/o 33 Lilac Road, Hoddesdon, Herts, England, EN11 0PG, UK.
Metallica, oops, I've left my address book in the office, sorry...
Moonfog, Simon, Logatrina, Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow, Ireland.
Mourning Beloveth, c/o Adrian Butler, Luggacurren, Stradbally, Co. Laois, Ireland.
Ninth Circle, c/o Hog's Head Music, 62 South Clerk Street, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH8 9PS, UK.
Primordial, c/o Alan Averill, 95 St Declan's Rd, Marino, Dublin 3, Republic of Ireland.
Scald, c/o Paulrus, 32 Dellmount Road, Bangor, Co. Down, Northern Ireland, BT20 4TY.
Skinlab, c/o Century Media
Solstice, PO Box 107, Dewsbury, England, WF13 3YS, UK.
Suffering, 141 Montague Road, Leytonstone, London, England, EW11 3EW, UK.
Sweet Savage, c/o Neat Records.
Violation, c/o Paul, Dairy Cottages, Wakefield Lodge Estate, Potterspurty, Towcester, Northants, England, N12 7QX, UK
Waylander, c/o Ciaran O'Hagan, 28 Magheraville Road, Millford, Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland, BT60 3PP, UK

Labels

Ars Metallii, Rosengasse 3, 15230 Frankfurt (Oder), Germany.
Blackend, c/o PHD Ltd, Unit 15, Bushell Business Estate, Hithercroft, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 9DD, England, UK.
Cacophonous, 231 Portobello Road, London, England, W11 1LY, UK
Century Media, Schaeferstrasse 33a, 44147, Dortmund, Germany.
Copro, PO Box 4429, Henley on Thames, Oxon, England, RG9 1GH, UK.
Diehard, Vindegade 101, 5000 Odense C, Denmark.
Earache, PO Box 144, Nottingham, England, NG3 4GE, UK
Eldethorn (see Neat)
Merciless, Fuhlingstr. 18, 97469 Gochsheim, Germany.
Metal Blade, PO Box 1332, 73054 Eislingen, Germany.
Miskatonic Foundation, PO Box 107, Dewsbury, England, WF13 3YS, UK.
Music for Nations/ Peaceville, 333 Latimer Rd, London, England, W10 6RA, UK.
Neat, 71 High St East, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear, England, WE28 7RJ, UK.
Necropolis, PO Box 14815, Freemont, CA 94539-4815, USA.
Nuclear Blast, Hauptstrasse 109, 73072 Donzdorf, Germany.
Repulse Records, PO Box 50562, 28080-Madrid, Spain. Email: info@repulse.es
Screams of Salvation, PO Box 76, New Ferry, L63 0QT, England, UK.
Southern Lord Recordings, PO Box 291967, Los Angeles, CA, 90029, USA. Email: sunn666@aol.com
SPV, PO Box 721147, 30531 Hannover, Germany.
Wicked World (see Earache)

WE DARE YOU TO LOOK INTO THE..

FITTED KITCHENS

OF THE

LIVING DAMNED

METALLICA

EPISODE

entombed

Cathedral

PARADISE LOST

SKINLAB

epoch

ARCANE SUN

Mourning Beloveth

ARCANE SUN

ISSUE 2

TIDHE TWO POUNDS

SELLOUT
ISSUE

A quickie from our Ed, Spandex Oo-er

'bout ye, scumsuckers... and welcome to volume 2 of the experience that is ~~FITTED KITCHENS OF THE LIVING ARSE~~. Eight months after issue one was spewed forth back in Nov '98, FKOTLD zine is back to bring you several more fleeting moments of entertainment. Bigger, better, more nutritious.

As with all things in life, it has been a pretty steep learning experience. Harsh realities faced by the Kitchen staff have included the fact that nothing will be recorded in an interview if you forget to switch the tape recorder on, that the majority of punters prefer to spend a couple of quid on another pint of pissy lager than to support the scene, and that there is no such thing as young yo-yo-knickered zine groupies. Pleasant discoveries, on the other hand, have included the startling revelation that we will never have to pay our way into another gig or buy another album for the rest of our (un)natural lives. Handy, that. More cash in our pockets for sweets and porn.

In this issue, you'll find interviews carried out by the FKOTLD masters of disaster with many a 'big' name. Basically, anyone VERY METAL who has played in either Belfast or Dublin in recent months has been abducted at some stage in their visit and forced under frankly inhuman conditions to speak to us. News, views and gossip have been extracted for your delectation. We've nicknamed this zine #2 as 'The Sell Out Issue' in anticipation of the crap that's inevitably going to be flung at us by cave-dwellers; people who will whine that we shouldn't cover the biggy acts, question the relevance of Metallica to Metal today, blah blah blah. All valid points, but think about it this way... like it or not, most people who pick up this zine will do so because they see one of their long term favourite bands on the cover. It could be Entombed or Paradise Lost, two bands which have radically altered their sound in recent years. Whatever; they're also buying a zine which will bring them details of many lesser known acts at the same time and encourage them to check out Metal beyond the glossy magazines and the corporate advertising machine. So there.

Rest assured that we're continuing our policy of highlighting the very best of the Irish and UK Extreme Metal underground... check out the interviews with Arcane Sun, Epoch, Abaddon Incarnate and Mourning Beloveth, four Irish acts more deserving of your attention than much of the generic drivel being pedalled by labels these days. Bands take note, as issue 3 (due out Feb/March 2000) will be a comprehensive directory of the very best of extreme Metal in Ireland; get in touch, ye feckless wasters.

Likewise, the demystification process marches ever onward courtesy of Mr LeCat's throbbing tips. This issue continues on the basics laid out in issue 1 and should provide the novice (and occasional not-so-novice) with a few things to consider before parting with their ever-limited readies.

Fitted Kitchens can be likened to a loathsome creature which wriggles its way through the city sewers and crawls up your arse when you're having a dump. Initially quite uncomfortable, but always good for talking about afterwards.

Let the nightmare commence...

Spandex

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Written, edited and brutally nailed together after a great deal of hassle from the FKOTLD computer by Spandex Oo-er. All interviews by Spandex. Contributors: Joe Solo le Cat, Mo Tormentor of Christian Souls, Mr Nightmare of Doom and Motorbike Frenzy. IT Emergency bloke with answers and infinite patience: Joe Solo. Front cover and back cover paintings by Paulrus/Paul McCarroll.

Fitted Kitchens is a desperate attempt by a handful of losers to find some deeper meaning in life. Please indulgence these social spasms by sending your demos, albums, criticism (good or bad or whatever), news, cartoons, freebies etc to

**FITTED KITCHENS OF THE LIVING
DAMNED
c/o A. Orr
PO Box 1056
Belfast
BT9 7JH
Northern Ireland
UK.**

Email: fittedkitchens@hotmail.com

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Hearty hails in no particular order whatsoever to the following upstanding citizens; LG and Entombed, Paul and Arcane Sun, Jason and Metallica, Dan the Man from the Metallica/ Q-Prime crew, Sharon at Universal (Ireland), Lesley at Mercury (UK), Jason and Epoch, Paul McCarroll/Paulrus, Brian and Deprived zine (Misanthropy RIP), Crin and Godreah zine, Paddy and Ailleacht Na Dorcha zine, Andy at Century Media, Grey and Kentucky Fried Afterbirth zine, Donna at Paranoid Promotions, Rich and Solstice, Malcome Dome at Metal Hammer, Steev and Skinlab, Bill and Steve and Abaddon Incarnate, Alan and Bond of Blood zine/ Primordial, Nick and Paradise Lost, Alan and Andy at The Rosetta, Nick and The Dead Sea zine, Lee and Cathedral, yer ma, Adrian and Mourning Beloveth, all the senders of demo gifts and goodies (keep 'em cuming!), Dan at Earache, Julie at Cacophonous, Gavin and Megin Giord zine, Karl at Blackend/ Phd, Jess at Neat, anyone with sufficient foresight to have bought issue #1 of this rag, it will surely become a treasured collector's piece, Joker at Necropolis, Dave at Repulse, Volker at Merciless, Chris at Screams of Salvation, Jorge Olate for the Chilean Metal, Graham and Intoxicated zine, Mike and Firefight zine, Ryan at Copro records, Gary Levermore at Toral, Roland at Workhard PR, Christophe at Ars Metall and any other jolly good fellows who we may have overlooked. Metal reigns supreme; Crusade!



Disaffected with all the identikit drivel on the shelves these days? Well, Ireland's Arcane Sun could be just the tonic yer after. In case you've been living under a particularly large and heavy stone, this act have just given extreme Metal one of the finest debut albums in recent years.

I'm sitting here (March '99) in the basement of a less than salubrious Dublin bar with Paul Kearns, vocalist with Arcane Sun. Also present is Paul's taxi home, also known as 'Aido' Butler, bassist with Ireland's masters of Doom, Mourning Beloveth. After getting the pints and peanuts in, and clearing the manky table of fag ash and what can only be lung detritus, we get done to the actual business itself- the interview. Ok, let's get the obvious one out of the way first, baby... tell us the how's and why's and what's of Arcane Sun

"Alright, the band began about '94 after the demise of my previous outfit, **Fifth Dominion** which Aido was closely involved with. We started jamming early '95, played with **Anathema** in June that year, recorded a demo, recorded a promo in May '96 and signed to **Ars Metall** soon after it. Recorded the CD early '98. The original idea behind the band was a Metal version of **Fields of the Nephilim**, which kinda got watered down, then there was the whole British doom/ death scene of the early 90's... **Anathema**, early **Paradise Lost**, **My Dying Bride**, **De-composed**, bit of Swedish stuff now and then like **Dissection**. Other stuff like **Led Zeppelin**, **Fergal's** a big **Yes** fan, shit like that. **Dead Can Dance**, obviously, and **Morbid Angel**"

The early Anathema comparison is particularly evident I'd say.

"Apart from the fact that its 100 percent original of course!"

The album is definitely one of the strongest and most charismatic debuts that I've heard in quite a while now. For me, the stand out song is clearly 'Longing for Eden's Rain', a meisterwerk epic where all the best elements of Arcane Sun fall seamlessly into place.

'Sundrenched' et al follow very closely behind. But what sort of reception has the album had? I mean, its been out several months now, but I still haven't seen anything in the likes of Terrorizer et al. What's up?

"Well basically, the label (**Ars Metall**- Ed) has no UK distribution. You can get it through **Supernal** and **Misanthropy**, but it should be in **Metal Hammer** soon enough, and **Terrorizer**. Reception's been good, I mean reviews in the underground have been really brilliant... but good reviews don't always mean good sales"

All too true, Paul, all too true, and it's no different in zine land. People are always going to be more interested in buying a few more pints and trying pathetically to get into some tart's knickers than in spending their cash on local zines or demos etc. Turning to Aido... you obscenely jealous of Arcane Sun's success?

"Well, you know, Paul gets all his influences from me!"

It's really only in recent months that Arcane Sun have begun to get a steady stream of coverage in the underground press. Regarding the interviews you done for zines to date, what are the 3 worst questions that you've been asked to date, and indeed, have I just repeated any of them?

"No... I suppose after a while you get bored of the 'history', but I don't want to be as mean as to give cut n'paste answers. The worst question, I got it in an interview last week. The question was something like 'How do you make Irish stew?' Another one was 'Why don't you play Hardcore?'"

Because it's shite?

"Yeah, there you go. I said that I thought Hardcore was more of a sport, cos people seem to go to the gigs, not to listen to the music, but to jump around"

Hmm, as an aside here purely to wind up any misguided Hardcore dudes perusing this mag... it interesting that Hardcore's so deeply homo-erotic... almost paedophilic... the guys in their little-boy shorts and knee-socks... the bare-chested tactile machismo...

"Yeah, I know, I know. The biggest thing about HC is the fact that everyone professes to love each other. They're probably all cunts! There are one or two decent bands, like early **Life of Agony** and stuff like that, classic, but that's probably about it"

Any coverage from the press on this fair isle? 'Hot Press' music magazine or anything? In fact, any coverage or acknowledgement of the Metal scene in the mainstream music rags over here at all?

"I'll say this over and over again until I'm blue in the face, but Ireland's a fucking joke. I mean, you've got venues that won't put on anything but traditional fat-bastard Guinness-drinking, flute-playing motherfuckers, and you've got the press... I suppose it all goes back to the fact that the Republic of Ireland is 60 percent Catholic, an overly conservative society you know? I mean, you can't listen to **Morbid Angel**, but you can be a priest and have sex with young boys. There's a twisted logic there I think! In fact, this is our first 'Irish' interview."

Paul's answer should give the reader an appreciation of the sheer sense of frustration which extreme metal bands face here in Ireland. Northern Ireland's not much better when you consider the fact that an **ELO** gig was banned a few years back 'because they were Satanic'.

Or the fact that **Iron Maiden** got picketed in Belfast on Bruce's last tour. But let's move onto the song subjects themselves. Hmm, the lyrics ain't overly uplifting; love n'loss, with occasional glimpses of hope (such as 'Sundrenched'). Some of the songs are actually very effective short stories, but do you often find yourself losing the plot and straying into pure bollox land?

"Yeah... that's the main point actually! No, but seriously, with the songs, four are

from the demo (**Canto**, **Canto 2**, **Sundrenched**, and **Promised**) and were all connected with a common thread. Then, with two songs on the promo, 'I was alive then' and 'Your name', there was again a common thread. Likewise with the four new songs 'Avatar', 'Words were like wine', 'Eden's rain' and 'We stood with time'. I suppose, being involved with Metal and other similar music, you don't feel inspired to write any words when you're feeling happy, it just doesn't cut the mustard"

That reminds me of the famous **Rob Halford** quote that went something along the lines of 'You can't sing about flowers in this kind of music... it just doesn't work'. How do you remember them live? Do you just gulder and shriek and bluff yer way through?

"Pretty much. There's bits and pieces where you bluff your way, but nobody's going to notice, especially as I don't think my singing



is the clearest, the diction isn't the best at times, you know? And as far as the growls go, who the fuck knows? But generally its no problem, I've practised them so many times that its almost second nature". Uh oh, here's the dreaded 'box a' category 'b' question. I'd say that Arcane Sun is essentially Doom-Death Metal, but contradict me if I'm wrong. In fact, how would you best describe it?

"Epic Arcane Metal. The songs were written over four years, so they've seen emotional and musical changes, certain songs tip their hats to certain areas. Yeah, I suppose Doom-Death is the closest... 'Canto 2', for example, has pretty furious Death metal bits in it, but there again, 'Sundrenched' is almost Black metal in places. Yeah, you could say Doom-Death, but you're not really summing everything up" I stand corrected. 'Arcane Sun' was recorded early last year, but didn't come up for more than a few months. What was the story there?

"Mainly our fault. We finished recording it on Valentine's day 1998, very fitting eh?, and it was supposed to be out mid-June, but the cover artwork used wasn't the original artwork which was much better, but for some reason the software the guy was using couldn't take it, so the whole thing was delayed by about three months. By the time we had a new layout and photos it was September, so it came out October in Europe and November here".

Hmm, rather less exciting than I had imagined. But even after all this delay, you still managed to miss out one guy's photo on the inlay. Did this cause any rock-star tantrums?

"Well, there was no bassist for the album and a guy, Brian, played guitar on some of the album but wasn't properly in the band, so he didn't deserve his photo in there. It was mainly myself, Mark and Fergal, well Fergal did almost everything, he was the wonder boy for the CD! Joe came into the band just after that, but he hadn't played on the CD, so we didn't see the point in his photo being there, and neither did he".

OK, all bands have a secret. Who's gay in Arcane Sun?

"The guy we kicked out" Smart answer. Right, pretend I'm an uncommonly generous and human promoter. What do you desire for yer rider?

"Lots of lard! We've never really had a rider for a gig. We played the Devil's Church in London in July '96, we travelled over from Dublin to London, we got money for the gig but we were told that we'd be sorted for food and beer. There were five of us, and we got four cans of beer, which is the most we've ever got. Every single gig which we've done has been self-arranged, so whatever our pockets allow, that's our rider".

You share a house with Alan Averill from Primordial and Aido, yeah? Is this Heavy Metal HQ, Dublin? Aido points out that he left a while back because Paul kept eating all the food. Paul insists on it being put on record that it was, in fact, Mr Averill. He continues

"It was originally mucker (bog-trotting rural rednecks- Ed) HQ, they were all from the Laois/ Kildare area, and we infiltrated and brought in a certain level of sophistication, tidied the place up a bit. Ciaran and Alan from Primordial and myself live there now. It'll be probably be trashed when Solstice stay over"

Ok, Paul, tell us a bit about yourself. What are your motivations, why do you bother given that it eats up an incredible amount of time and energy and cash. Basically, what do you want to do with your life? Be warned though, if you say 'I wanna ROCK', I'll spit in your beer.

"Ha! I wanna settle down, have a family, have eight kids who talk with a strong Dublin accent and who'll be fit for slaughter at the age of five. Nah, seriously, being in a band is hard, its expensive, if you talk to people in Europe, they all tend to have better equipment than we do, better circumstances to practice in, and they don't have to deal with the same societal tunnel-vision which is a big problem here. Here, if you're into Metal, 'if you wanna rock', people tend to think you're the Devil Incarnate or something, which is quite nice cos it sets you apart from the norm. It's a pain in the ass at times, but when you do a good gig etc, its cool, there's nothing better"

Little bit of politics now. What do you make of the past year in Northern Ireland? It's only a couple of days until the first anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, which paved the way for the establishment of N.I.'s first democratically-elected Government after a quarter of a century of 'emergency rule' from Britain. Any views?

"Not particularly. I don't read the papers, I don't watch the news; to obey the cliché, every bit of literature that I read is centred around Metal and rock n'roll. Pretty sad, but true. As far as the whole thing up there (NI- Ed) goes, organised religion is a fucking joke anyway, so I don't see the point in fighting over it. Catholicism is wrong, Protestantism is wrong, its just different stances on something which may have been fresh two thousand years ago"

It's not even a religious thing.. It's a power struggle, its embedded in territorial disputes, its institutionalised into every facet of life (segregation of schoolkids by religion being a prime example of the stupidity).

"Its just like in Dublin, you've got the junkie population, you can't have anything but a lack of respect for those people, though that's probably more of a social thing cos its in your face. In Northern Ireland, you've got people who are splitting into two different groups, supposedly by religion, and a whole hate campaign which has long transcended religion... Fuck it, find Rock n'roll" Peace Through Rock?

"Yeah! Ha ha".

Ok, any closing words at all?

"Buy the Arcane Sun CD. Buy the Mourning Beloveth demo. Stop us going bankrupt. Ignore the trends, stick to Morbid Angel cos they deserve eternal hails... and roll on Dynamo!"

Arcane Sun are Paul Kearns (vocals), Mark Higgins (drums) and Fergal (guitar). They are currently seeking a replacement for Joe.

NEWS... and all that sort of stuff...

A regular feature of this zine will be to keep readers up to date with news, be it for good or ill, of all bands featured in previous issues; good idea, huh? Of course, being only two issues old, this isn't quite as difficult a task at it shall surely become. Anyhows, enough drivel from me, on with the gossip...

Northern Ireland's Waylander have added a second guitarist to their deathly folky-jiggery-pokery, bringing the line-up to six hairy-arsed bog men. The 666-stringer in question is Peter Boylan, a member of an earlier line up. They've been doing quite a lot of gigging in recent months, supporting the likes of Solstice and Cathedral on the Belfast dates of their respective tours, and are due to start recording album number 2, tentatively entitled 'Life, Dark, Endless Knot' for their label Century Media. And no, despite persistent rumours, their tin-whistler and fist-banging maniak Fart hasn't been thrown out of the band.

Things are looking a bit grim in the world of Sweet Savage at the minute, with the Belfast band currently on hold. Drummer Davey tells me that despite many a rave review of last year's 'Rune' album, sales have been slow, even in Der Bastionne of all things Metal, Germany. Furthermore, it wasn't even distributed in Japan, the land where NWOBHM style stuff goes down as easily as fine Sake. On a brighter note, the band travelled to New Jersey earlier this year to play on one of the three stages alongside the likes of Anvil, Tygers of Pan Tang, Raven and Blitzkreig, and saw their guitarist Simon being voted 'guitarist of the gig'. And, of course, their track 'Killing Time' appeared on Metallica's monster 'Garage Inc' album. This is the second time that Metallica have released this cover (the first time being on the b-side of one of their seven inches from the Black album... fuck me, I've forgotten which on ah ha! its The Unforgiven). Due to various legacies of past labels and all that sort of business side of things, Sweet Savage have yet to receive royalties from the latest cover, but Neat mainman Jess Cox is on the case to get the band what's owed them. Top chap.

Dublin's Primordial are due to release their new mini-album on Hammerheart Records (HHR@xs4all.nl) in the very near future, which contains new tracks and reworkings of oldies. I would have liked to have been able to tell you how it sounds, but vocalist Alan hasn't bothered to send me an advance tape, despite several calls. What a lazy young man. However, he tells me that Primordial's four-date stint with Mayhem on the 'Annihilation of the Lowlands' traipse through Belgium and Holland (April) went most enjoyably, and it seems that the band were in awe of the salubrious nature of touring on the continent... with things like showers, food, decent accommodation and soundchecks etc all being commonplace, a far cry from this shit-hole of an island.

(continued on page 31)

Cathedral

Despite being around for a fair few years now, this is only the first time that England's masters of doomy dailiance have played Ireland. Quite shocking, really. Fitted Kitchens took tea with Lee Dorian (vocals and flares) before their Belfast gig, to chastise them for all the delays, chat about the new album, Lee's musical history, and the perils and pitfalls of that ol'devil, rock n'roll...

ABOUT BLOODY TIME...

Well Lee, yer here in Ireland at last, what the fuck kept you?

"Well, we were supposed to come over early '94, and we were very disappointed when we couldn't make it. What happened then was that we were out on tour with Black Sabbath, and we had some people guesting with us, Victor and Joey from Pentagram, on second guitar and drums, cos we'd just lost ours at that time, and half way through the tour it became apparent that working with Victor wasn't going to last very long unfortunately, and both him and Joey went back to the States. We ended up with no drummer and no second guitar player and so we couldn't come over. Which was a real bummer because I think Ireland's the last place out of everywhere that we've always wanted to play. I mean, its pretty ironic that you can go and play in Australia, the other side of the world and go to Japan five or six times, but you still can't get twenty miles over the water to come and play in Ireland"

"But well, we're here at last, you know, its taken us a long time, but we're very happy to be here and we're very much looking forward to these two shows. I mean, its much like a personal thing for us, especially for me and Gaz being in the band for so long, for years to come over and play"

You're currently touring to promote your new album, 'Caravan Beyond Redemption'. It seems that every time Cathedral release a new album the media find yet another tag to hang around your neck. To date, we've had 'doom', 'disco doom', and now there's 'stoner rock'. What do you make of all this categorisation?

"To me, the stoner thing is just another thing for the media to try and understand something that's quite hard for them to comprehend, putting a category on it just to make it accessible to the readers, when really its just good old traditional heavy rock, heavy Metal, played with like a bit of enthusiasm and energy. To me, real Metal is about riffs and playing with conviction and having a bit of soul in what you do, and I think all the kind of industrial and dance/techno stuff which has taken over and infiltrated it has destroyed what Metal really is"

I don't know that that's entirely true, there's been some really great crossover stuff. Like for me, Fear Factory's 'Demanufacture' is one of the best albums of the 90's.

"Well, its like Korn and shit like that, to me that has nothing to do with Metal. OK,

maybe I might be too old school, but I just don't think there's any real conviction or passion in that kind of music. I just like to see a gig where there's heavy riffs, people getting into what they're doing, and a bit of fucking attitude and aggression in what they do. And I think that's what we're trying to put across in our music. We like to express ourselves in our music how we feel as individuals, even though the subject matter might be strange to some people. Our whole persona comes through our music, you know, it can't come across any other way for us. I think at the end of the day, if you want to call it disco doom, which is totally fucking ridiculous, stoner doom, stoner rock, it doesn't really matter, its just heavy metal heavy rock music. Even that's a bit of a generalisation really, because I think there are a lot of other influences in our music that aren't very obvious."

The man's on a roll here...

"I come from a punk background anyway, I don't come from a more Metal background. I mean, I got into Metal through Maiden and bands like that, rather than through Trouble or something. Obviously, the first Metal bands I ever got into were early Metallica and early Slayer, and then I started getting into the underground death Metal bands, and then into Trouble, just because I thought they were the heaviest band I'd ever heard, those first two albums. After that, I got into Sabbath and from then onwards I changed my way of thinking about what Metal was. Bands like Trouble, St Vitus, Sabbath, Pentagram, Witchfinder General, that's the kind of stuff that I consider to be Metal"

You mentioned projecting your personality through your music, but how exactly do you mean? Is it in terms of presentation? Or simply by having a bit of a laugh with the audience in the live setting, refusing to take yourselves too seriously? Come on, my man, explain yourself.

"Well, there's a bit of everything, I mean as day to day individuals. When we first started, the music of Cathedral was a lot more extreme than it is now, a lot more morose and depressing, because that's how we felt at the time. We'd all come out of the Death Metal scene, or the grindcore scene or whatever, and I was just as much into the slower stuff as I was into the faster stuff. I just wanted to do something a bit different, so we took all our influences like Vitus and Pentagram and the Obsessed and stuff and decided to take that kind of music one step further, bring it into the 90's, make it more extreme, more heavy and downtuned than any of those bands had done before. That was our first and foremost ambition, and I think we probably achieved that when we did our first album. After that, we didn't want to feel restricted. I mean, if we'd have carried on just repeating the formula of our first album over and over again, I think we'd have lost the point of what the band was about, because the whole reason for forming Cathedral was to feel free in what we did, we didn't want to have the restrictions of the bands we'd been in previously. We made a conscious effort to try and make our music more challenging to us with each release"

JUST A RHYME WITHOUT A REASON?

Cathedral's song content is famously 'eccentric'. When you write your lyrics, it seems to me that it's a magpie approach

"Magpie approach?"

Yeah, I mean, there's references to TV, sci-fi, drugs, Hammer Horror flicks, bit of this, bit of that, whatever shiny nuggets catch your imagination. It seems fairly whimsical, and I'm wondering if you've ever suffered for that. I mean, you'd hardly be chuffed to be known as the doom Lawnmower Deth, would you?

"I think the smaller things in the band become the most obvious to some people. Its like, say on the song 'Utopian Blaster', there's this line in there that goes 'Huggy Bear, oh yeah!' People seem to pick up on these smaller things rather than the overall message that the song is trying to say. I like the band to reflect the kind of things that I relate to as a person, I don't think it should be one hundred percent negativity all the time if I don't feel that way myself. I think music should really reflect how you are as a person, so if part of my life involves trash culture that I might like, like shitty old B movies that have a lot of relevance to me in another way, I always try and include it. Even when I'm writing about an old movie, I try and put some social relevance into it and make it a story unto itself. I mean, a lot of the songs on the new album, say 'Satanikus Robotikus' for instance, you could look at that and think its based on some obscure B-movie from the 1950's but its not at all, its based on organised religion in America, about these evangelists that are imposing this end-time apocalyptic vision on people, making them afraid of their day to day life, making them repent to these people who just want their money basically, and instilling fear into them. I mean, they're supposed to be there for the glory of god or something, but really they're doing the devil's work"

OK, so explain the high-brow motives behind 'Captain Clegg' then! This question seems to catch Lee out, given what he's just said

"That's just the story of the film (Hammer Horror flick with Peter Cushing- Ed). In the same way that we wrote 'Hopkins (Witchfinder General)', it was almost like a follow up to that really. That's just like good time, disposable dark kind of humour song really, for the sake of it, and I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I don't think a band should be 100% political all the time, or even be political at all, because music is first and foremost about entertainment and I think music in itself is a very strong force for communication even if there is no political angle involved in it. The fact that it brings people together, even if its just based around pure entertainment, is a good thing in itself."

So do you think that people just want to analyse something that isn't actually there, just for the sake of it, reading too much into what, as you've just said, is entertainment?

"Well maybe sometimes it might seem that we go out of our way to confuse people, but we don't. I wouldn't say that we were self-indulgent, but we don't really think about our audience when we're writing music. We really just think about what we want to hear and what we want to put across, and if we were really concerned about people analysing it then we obviously wouldn't do the kind of music we do. We just do the music we do because we love it, that's all that matters to us"

You've got five albums under your belt now, but pundits were laying bets that you about to become a cropper on the basis of your last album, which I know came in for a lot of flak. What do you see as the main difference

between the two?

"Like I say, with each album we do, we like to try something a bit different just to



Lee arrives willingly for this interview

make it interesting for us. That's the thing that was missing on the last LP, we just didn't have time to explore it, we just had to come up with twelve, thirteen songs in the space of ten days and then go into the studio and record them. We didn't have time to pre-plan and work on atmospheres and moods on the last album. As it goes, it didn't really come in for much flak, but we didn't really feel happy about it ourselves. We mixed the whole album in twenty four hours straight so we didn't have much chance to actually balance things out and get much contrast in there. It was pretty much full-on all the way through, but on this album we had a lot more time to think about it, I mean the time gap between this album and the one before it is over two years, so we had a lot of time to contemplate what we'd done with our previous four albums and where we thought we should be going from then on. So I think with this album we just had a lot more time to prepare it, its probably the first time that we've all worked together as a band, as a unit, as opposed to myself and Gaz just writing everything. Everyone else had involvement this time in the song writing and ideas for melodies, song structures or whatever, everyone had some kind of input. When that happens you feel a lot more positive about what you do when everyone else is encouraging you to do something different and look at it another way. You go into the studio a lot more prepared and a lot more confident. I mean, most of the time we've gone into the studio very much under-prepared, maybe about 40% prepared and the rest of it came together in the studio. This time, it was pretty much 99% prepared before we went in".

SABBATH... BLOODY SABBATH

When it comes to Cathedral, every interview I read always stresses the Sabbath-Sabbath-Sabbath thing. I'm going off on a bit of a tangent here, but I've got this pet hate, and that's people who are so anal about their musical opinions that they subscribe to strict dictats about what's ok and what's not ok for them to like. For instance, with Sabbath, that it can only be **Ozzy**, and that everyone else was crap. Or that its only OK to like **AC/DC** before Bon Scott forgot to wake up while puking... What's your opinion on this?

"I've never really given a fuck about purity. I mean, what is purity? There's no such thing in human nature, purity's a complete fantasy. Whatever music I listen to, whatever catches my ear, it could be folk it could be jazz it could be funk it could be soul, if I like it then I'm not afraid to admit it. I'm not going to live behind some kind of shroud that says I have to

be 100% into the so-called purist bands in the scene. We've never been afraid to express ourselves how we want to, and I think that we might have lost some of our hardcore, narrow-minded people who were into our music in the first place on the first album. But at the same time if they are that narrow-minded, then they're probably not the right audience for us anyway, as there's more to us than that"

Yeah, they're wilfully ignoring other stuff, doing themselves a disservice

"Well, that's up to them. There's too much good stuff out there to restrict yourself to one kind of form. The more you expand on something, the more original it becomes and if you're going to stay shallow and narrow-minded to one cause, that just undermines your own progression in life. And to me, that's not just about the music you listen to... its about your whole personality. You're afraid to change in a natural way as people do. I mean, I'm not the same person as I was when I was 17, so obviously the music I'm playing now isn't going to be 100% the same as when I was 17. You shouldn't be afraid of natural progression in your own life"

Lee's clearly had his fill of that nay-sayers and detractors who have attacked over the years...

"I look back, and I'm very proud of the fact that I haven't been afraid to do something off the wall and do something a bit different. I mean, if you look at it from early **Napalm** onwards until now I think I've done some pretty diverse and challenging things. And, in years to come, if people say 'what would you like to be remembered for?' I'd say, for doing something a bit more diverse with a bit of risk. Not so much to be seen as some sort of pure icon figure who had 100% integrity, because the idea of 'integrity' that people have is very restrictive. My idea of integrity is following your own instincts and being true to yourself. Pretending to be true to some kind of scene, pretending to be into it when you really might be into something else, just to be 'cool', trying to be 100% something that you're not, I think that's the exact opposite of personal integrity; that's living a lie".

ANGRY YOUNG MEN

Which leads excellently onto the next question. How have your particular tastes changed over time?

"When I was in my teens, before **Napalm**, I said I'd never listen to **Metal** at all. I listen now to a lot of **Progressive 70's** bands that I'd hated at school. All the kids at school who wore their rucksacks with **Genesis**, **Uriah Heep** and **Yes** patches, I hated those fuckers, because they were all intellectual kids who were prefects, they were the brainy kids and I was a working class kid off a council estate who just liked rock music. I hated everything that that progressive art-wank stood for. So if

I could have imagined myself from aged 14, 15 to 16 years later listening to some of the music that I do today, I'd have probably shot myself. But, like everything in life, the more you see of life, the more open your mind becomes to a lot more things, and that includes music, it includes art, it includes everything really"

The Metal press often seems to adopt a 'year zero' approach to your musical career, their starting point being the stint with **Napalm Death**. Give us an idea of what you were up to before this time, how you got involved in the whole thing.

"Before **Napalm**, I was very much into the anarchist scene. I used to be quite heavily involved in that, used to go on a lot of demonstrations, do a lot of actions, 'Stop the City', stuff like that. For me, music had to relate to that way of political thinking and to the kind of things I was into a social sense. With early **Napalm**, the lyrics were very socially aware and political. So when I actually joined **Napalm**, I was like their biggest fan, I must have seen them about 65, 70 times before I actually joined them. I'd never had any intention of actually being in a band, I mean I'd done a fanzine, and I actually got asked to join this band from Cardiff called **Icons of Filth**, because they'd lost their bass player and because I used to follow them around before **Napalm**, I've got a tattoo of them from when I was about 16, they just asked me join and I was like 'Fuckin' Hell, I've never even touched a bass in my life, how the fuck am I supposed to join?'. Anyway, I did this job, I used to go around selling pictures, knocking on people's doors, selling them bogus prints and saying they were my exam pieces from college and that I needed the money to get through the next year. I used to make a fucking fortune! They used to cost like a pound, and I used to sell 'em for about 40 quid or something like that, I'd come home at night with



The 'classic' Napalm line-up; Lee, Bill, Mick, Shane

£200 in my pocket, just for bullshitting to these middle class people. Just putting on the sob story and the dog-face. So, after two weeks I bought my first bass and I was going to join them, but they broke up. And then there was a band from Birmingham, **Doom**, they said 'come and join us'. I didn't know what was going on, all these people asking me to join their bands, but anyway, then **Napalm** say 'join us' and I was like 'alright, I'll give it a go'."

Lee laughs as he recounts the confusion of his first few weeks with the band "The day before we were due in the studio, we

had a rehearsal and I didn't know what the fuck was going on, I didn't know when I was supposed to be on cue or anything like that. In the studio, Mick was standing next to me and he'd signal and I'd go like 'wooaarrghhh' on cue. Six months later, when that LP came out it was fucking everywhere, John Peel was playing it every night, front cover of **NME**, front cover of **Melody maker**, a BBC documentary, all over local TV, newspapers and shit"

I've seen that documentary, it was a split with **Slayer**, yeah? I remember you were all in someone's bedroom, being interviewed, with bizarre shots of the back garden being spliced in for some reason. Coming after **Slayer** it all seemed a bit, well, crap...

"That was Mick's bedroom. That was embarrassing... a highly embarrassing bit of TV footage, we didn't come across as very intelligent at all! I was very naive about all that and its only when I decided to leave that I realised that a lot of people were making money out of us, and that we'd seen fuck all. It gave me a good exposure to what the whole business was about, and that's initially when I started forming my own label ('**Rise Above**-Ed). I'd seen how labels had treated bands and how business had treated a lot of bands and the insight I got from seeing all the bullshit first hand inspired me to start doing something about it."

It was also around this time that Cathedral was spawned. Like all the best stories, it's a tale of random chance and pure luck...

"After leaving **Napalm**, I had no plans to be in another band. Then I met Gaz, his band (**Acid Reign**- Ed) was touring with **Nuclear Assault**. Danny (Lilker, bassist with the 'salties'- Ed) introduced me to him, and he said I should meet this guy because he was 'into all the Doom bands'. There wasn't really that many people in England at all into that kind of music, only a handful, so I met him. It's quite funny, cos that night **Acid Reign** and **Nuclear Assault** were due to go to Europe, and after Gaz finished the set he fucked off on the train and left the band a note in the dressing room! I didn't hear anything from him for another six months, but our original bass player, Griff, was doing this fanzine totally dedicated to **Doom Metal**, it was called '**Into the Oak**', and I think Gaz bought a copy off him at a **Carcass** gig. Griff used to do the slideshows for **Carcass**, and Griff told Gaz that we were thinking of getting a band together, just for fun, just to jam and stuff, not take it seriously or whatever, and he asked Gaz if he wanted to get involved. Gaz phoned me up, said the idea sounded great, doing stuff as slow as **Vitus** and **Winter** and stuff, and it went from there really. It wasn't planned in a predetermined way, we just did it. We did a demo and thought everyone else would hate it because it was the exact opposite of what was 'hip' at the time, and from there we ended up here".

MONEY FOR NOTHING AND CHICKS FOR FREE...

Let's move onto the tabloidy stuff about your rock apprenticeship; any sordid tales of debauchery, or was it all remarkably sedate? Lee laughs

"I've quietened down to a certain extent. I used to be a fucking animal, I must say. I mean, when I was young, I was really shy around girls and stuff, I mean extremely shy, if a girl showed any indication that she liked

me, I used to shit myself, go 'arghhh'. And then I'd just torture myself, wishing that I'd had a bit more self-confidence. And the irony of it is, you get into this band like **Napalm**, you don't expect anything, but you go on tour, you get to know people on a more social level a lot more easily if you're in a band, and you get to meet a lot more girls and your confidence increases. So from no experience with girls, well a very few fumbled experiences, before and actually getting in a band and touring, your whole confidence changes. In the early days, its like 'fuckin' hell', it's a massive playground that's open for you, and I suppose you go round shagging like a fucking demon for the first few years, but after a while the novelty wears off and you realise its all a bit superficial really, its all a bit false"

Hmm... the concept of sexual ennui seems utterly alien to a horny young stud-muffin like myself who hasn't got his leg over in what seems like several eternities.... I wonder if there are such things as zine-groupies out there...

"But it's good doss" he continues. "Before **Napalm**, I used to have to save up all my ten pences and two pences and save enough money to have a pint in the pub. If you go out on tour, you've got beer there for you all day in the fridge, drink yourself stupid for free, play the music you want to play, people enjoy you playing it, it's like y'know, that's kind of the more 'leisurely' angle to it. There's a lot more deeper stuff involved with touring and being in a band. It's not all one big party, because there's a lot of hard work involved as well".

LORD DORIAN AND THE MAJESTY OF ROCK?

With all the coverage and exposure that Cathedral gets these days, how do you avoid getting seduced by all the hype?

"You can easily lose touch with yourself, its very easy to have your head transcend to a million miles above the sky. When we got signed to **Colombia** in the states, it was like 'fucking hell, what's going on?' They were flying us over to **New York** every two weeks, putting us up in five-star hotels, taking us out to five-star restaurants, and we weren't even that bothered, we just wanted to go an eat at a **Taco Bell** or something, we didn't want five-star fucking meals with all the top heads of **Colombia** and sitting around a table being totally false and polite to them when you don't even give a shit who they are anyway. We'd just rather have gone to a bar with our mates and had a bit of a laugh. The more this sort of superstar thing I thrown at you, it can go to your head quite easily"

It seems that you've managed very well to avoid the rock-star trap, avoiding the egotism that many people show such a penchant for

"Well, back then, I was living in a real shitty bit of **Coventry** and I made sure I stayed living there, a real working class area. To go to the States and have people kissing your arse for 3 months and being totally false towards you, to come back to where I was living brought me slam back down to earth, cos you couldn't get much more down to earth than the area I was living, and I still have my friends there, never lost touch with them"

So when do you move into the **Deep Purple** estate in the country then?

"Not yet, not yet! It's a two up, two down now, so it hasn't expanded that far yet!!"

With this, its time to end the interview as Lee has to go soundcheck for the night's gig. Think I'll have a few more pints in the meantime. Cheers!

Cathedral are Lee Dorrian (vocals), Gaz Jennings (guitar), Leo Smees (bass) and Brian Dixon (drums)

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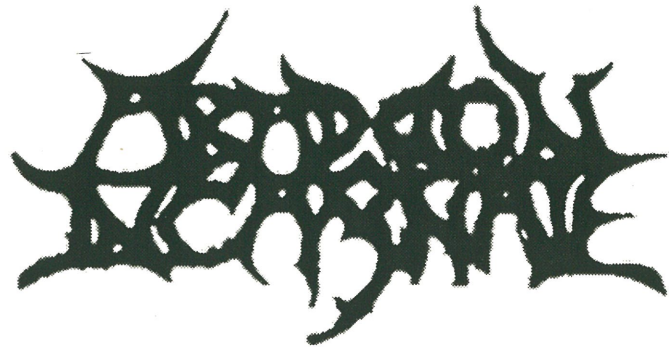
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It's an old saying that the Devil has all the best tunes... and Ireland's Abaddon Incarnate would surely concur. From the twisted minds of these four Deathheads has come their debut album, 'The Last Supper', a platter of pure, filthy, nasty Death Metal capable of flaying skin from bone at several yards...

Fitted Kitchens chats to Steve (vocals, guitars) and Bill (guitars) to find out more about this extreme audio experience.

It's likely that most readers won't have heard of Abaddon Incarnate, so give us a quick run through of the warts n'all history of AI...

Steve "We formed in '95 from the ashes of **Bereaved** as a four piece, with myself on vocals and lead guitar and Bill on lead guitars, Rob Tierney on bass and Olan Parkinson on drums. With this line-up, we recorded the 'When the Demons Come' demo which had on it five songs of Brutal Occult Death Metal which had a dodgy sound due to a lack of good engineers and studio experience on our part. However, it got good reviews and sold well too!!!! Then we played many gigs around Ireland and became a formidable live act. After a brief sabbatical (Olan moved to England to play in **Blastcage** and play the gig circuit over there) we got together and recorded 'Aeons of Me Rising', a two track promo which, sounding more mature and brutal secured us a record deal with Seasons of Mist in France. We travelled far, far north to a freezing redneck town in Finland to record our CD 'The Last Supper' in Tico Tico, which also produced **Impaled Nazarene** and **Sentenced**. Since then, Rob decided to quit for reasons too many to go into and we teamed up with Cory Sloan, of **Afterlife** and **Fifth Dominion** fame. He assumed bass playing responsibilities and the result is more than satisfactory".



What is the political/ collective band/ your personal agenda behind AI? How did you get into making this sweet sweet muzak? And what is it about Death Metal that you identify with and which has led you to play it?

Steve "Abaddon Incarnate is about Hate, Nihilism, Traditional Devil Worship and other horrific stuff. Politically, I suppose, we don't care!!!! We like to play extreme music and don't give a fuck about any other aspect of life. I play in Abaddon Incarnate because I love Speed and Death Metal. And I owe it to the thousands of devils and forces to promote their hate to mankind. I am a gateway for them to project evil and hate!"

In other interviews (such as in 'Deprived' zine), you've compared your music to Morbid Angel, early Impaled Nazarene and Cryptopsy. That's a fair illustration, but I do think it sells your sound short. For example, on several of the geetar leads on your album I noticed a definite early

Nocturnus feel, would you agree? What other bands have either influenced your sound or simply inspired you to get up and start cranking out your own Deathly fayre?

Bill "Immolation are a definite influence in our music since all the band have a great respect for them. The lead solos are a mish-mash of mainly three bands, primarily Immolation, Morbid Angel and **Deicide**. Because we've been listening to these bands since we have been into Death Metal our solos obviously reflect in a way the style of these three bands. This isn't to say that the solos are carbon copies; they reflect what each of us derive from these Metal bands. Deicide: fast solos with little melody. Morbid Angel: fast and off-the-wall. Immolation; slower, but more melodic. These bands and others have helped shape Abaddon Incarnate to create a sound which is unique"

Steve "Mmmm... Nocturnus have excellent leads and personally they influence me a lot. I learned many scales and sweeps from listening to them, but we are so much faster and less technical than them that I don't think you can compare. Deicide, **Malevolent Creation**, Immolation and **Strapping Young Lad** are other bands that definitely influence us. As regards our sound, I would describe it as heavy as fuck, very very dark and extremely fast!"

AI have just got a new bass player, this seems a tad unusual given that you've just secured a deal and are about to release yer debut... a strange time to be jumping ship. What's the story here?

Steve "Rob was losing interest slowly for years but, being a cool bass player and a close friend for the last eight years or so, he just never left. It was his decision to leave and his attitude was getting us all down.

When we met Cory his attitude was perfect, he's like a breath of fresh air. He knows all the songs now and we are as tight, if not tighter, live now so it's not a problem. The new line-up has us all more focussed on the band in general. It has been a very good thing to happen. In regards to our timing, if Rob was leaving it's better for him to have gone now before we start writing new material and stuff; Cory should have as much input as possible to get as much back for himself as possible. Rob played with us in Abaddon and Bereaved and put a lot into the band over these past seven years or so, but he doesn't want to play any more and the time came for him to call it a day".

I've seen AI live on a couple of occasions and have been very impressed with the band's presentation on stage... what with Steve's between-song rasps etc it has a very strong 'European' Metal feel to it. It reminds me of Mille from

Kreator. In fact, I'd say that there is a definite thrash vein running through AI. Is it a deliberate decision to project such an image, which is presumably tongue-in-cheek. Presumably it'll remain confined to the live setting, as it'd be difficult to translate the live vibe onto studio recording?

Steve "Tongue in cheek? You presume wrong, my friend, I'm deadly serious when I 'rasp'. I really do feel possessed when I play. When I say that I hate it I mean it!! The thrash vein is probably from the **Metallica**, **Slayer** and **Megadeth** influence, bands that I forgot to mention earlier on but who got us all into Metal in the beginning... and **Iron Maiden**, of course. We put a lot of samples between the songs like rabid dogs, killing children and parts from **The Evil Dead** to get the between-song stuff we do live onto tape. We throw ourselves into the performance when we play live, give it as much as we can for the forty minutes to an hour we play".

'The Last Supper' isn't officially released yet as I write these questions, and I only have an advance tape, so I haven't had a chance to check out your lyrics... perhaps you could select a few songs and take us through the lyrics to give us an idea of AI's subject matter...

Steve "Well, 'Nihilist', the opening track, is about that, destruction for it's own sake; burn the world!! 'I Hate' is about raping women (come on guys, wise up ... Ed). 'The Sharing of Thoughts with the Dead' is about taking LSD and ecstasy in a graveyard and empathising with the dead. 'Temple of Rancid Filth' is a prayer to all the hate and spite and darkness inside me. 'Vermithrax' is about christianity being a homosexual religion and genocide of all christians/ faggots. 'Vile Pleasures...' is about indulgence and sex and drugs to attain spiritual wellbeing. 'Raping Ground' is about war in the afterlife and atrocities against angels and christ and the gang rape of holy Mary. 'When the Demons Come' is about armageddon. 'Manhead' is about ugly women who like to slice themselves up. 'Forced Osculum Inframe' is about sex with animals. We all stand behind the lyrics 100%".

The Death Metal genre has a healthy fixation with all things gory. I think it was Autopsy who had a song called 'Battery Acid Enema' and Cannibal Corpse who did 'Meathook Sodomy', but I could be mistaken. Whatever, who did what is not really that important, tell me; in your opinion, how has the Death genre evolved and matured through the 90's? What do you make of crap like Six Feet Under who seem determined to peddle their shockingly tedious Death Metal Lite™ in this enlightened day and age?

Bill "I think who did what IS important. Image plays a big role in Death Metal. If Morbid Angel come up with something new, there is always a band there to rip them off. **Six Feet Under**; for fuck's sake, if they were just another bad act you could say okay, but the fact that the lead singer is the ex-**Cannibal Corpse** singer makes me want to vomit... IDIOT. In the early '90s when Death Metal was just starting, bands were getting signed whether they were good or bad. All of a sudden, labels realised that they had signed a lot of shit bands and thought 'fuck... we can't sign any more'. Unfortunately, this fucked up the chances for a lot of bands to come. Nowadays, Death Metal bands have to be damned good to get signed. It is happening with Black Metal also. Four or five years from now there will be some amazing Black Metal bands out there, who are not signed simply because they were not around at the right time. It's the same with all types of music".

Scary hairy-arsed Deathsters have an alarming habit of being really nice guys. Tell me that this isn't true for AI, that yer really a bunch of complete kunts and not a crowd of middle-class mummy's boys.

Steve "We are middle class alright, but I don't give a fuck. We come from the Death Metal class, **The Highest Caste!!!** As regards us being cuntz, yes, we are. We are completely self-obsessed wankers and we hate everything. Very dangerous when we are drunk!"

Bill "We are complete cuntz!!!!!!!"

It's fair to say that Death Metal in Ireland in recent years has been overshadowed by other 'extreme' genres, be they Black or Doom or whatever. Besides yourselves, there aren't that many other acts around today who peddle a similar symphony of sickness. The only other vaguely similar Irish bands that spring to mind are the now-defunct Morphosis and Lesshelp... I think that Putrefy tried to give it another go, but mutated into the excellent Emaciate, who are currently doing the rounds up North. Belfast's Scald arguably come from a similar musical base, though more grind-orientated and more technical in approach. But apart from this, not a great deal else... what's the reason in your eyes?

Bill "Black Metal came in, Death went out. The reason that not many bands play the music we play is because it is hard to become good at it, especially live. You can't just start out playing this music; to reach the standard we play at takes time. This time is what makes or breaks a band, most of the time they split. Another reason is that Black Metal at the moment sells, whereas Death, because of its extremity, does not".

What are your opinions on the Irish Metal scene in general?

Bill "The Irish scene is small and therefore will always be shite compared o other countries, although lately, interest in it is picking up. This is because bands that have been going for ages are suddenly being signed and that has brought a lot of attention to the scene, which is all for the better. It's good to see that bands like **Primordial**, **Arcane Sun**, **Waylander**, **Geasa**, **Moonfog** and **Mourning Beloveth** are doing what they do best. Without bands like these, there would be no underground".

Steve "I play in Geasa so obviously they are good. I love Moonfog and **Sinister Demise**. I think the scene is small and healthy, but is prone to over-saturation. I mean, this summer there has been a gig nearly every weekend and the crowds get smaller and smaller. But there are big bands coming these days, so interest is growing"

Both yourselves and Geasa have been to signed to Seasons of Mist, and both bands have debut albums out this year. What are your expectations of the label in terms of promotion and support; I've heard, for example, that Waylander have been disappointed by their label experiences to date.

Bill "I'd like to think that we would get good support and the rest, but now that **Mayhem** and Nocturnus have been signed to Seasons of Mist I can't see that much happening. Then again, I could be wrong. About labels in general, I heard that Waylander had some bad experiences too, but that kind of shit happens all the time. Band gets signed, band does album, band gets fucked over. It sucks, but bands get a raw deal from the label because they often fall short of expected album sales and then find themselves dropped or looked over. I don't think this was the case with Waylander sometimes the label fills bands full of shit, it works both ways".

Have AI figured out their long-term aspirations in the Metal game, or is it just a matter of seeing what happens and dealing with things as they rise?

Steve "We want to conquer the world and play live at massive death camps. We want to be bigger than Metallica. And have mass-suicides and murders at our concerts. I won't rest until this is achieved. It will take a lot of hard work and determination, but we will achieve it... or die trying!"

OK, if you were a punter, why should you be interested in AI?

Steve "Because we are the fastest band on earth, faster than Cryptopsy, darker than Mayhem, and the most punishing live act in the world. Do you think I'm over-confident?"

OK, many cheers for your patience and time; close off as you see fit!

Steve "We will play in the north with **Desecration** before christmas. The album will be available within the month of august. Go to Valhalla Metal club in Fibbers if you're in Dublin. Support Abaddon Incarnate or you're a wimp and a cunt. Anyone who wants to gig, email AINCARNATE@HOTMAIL.COM".

Bill "As you've said we have a unique live show, we are as fast as fuck, we are signed to an up and coming label and we're complete cuntz!... what more could you ask for?"

Abaddon Incarnate are Bill Whelan (guitars), Steve Maher (guitars/vocals), Olan Parkinson (drums) and Cory Sloan (bass). 'The Last Supper' will be released in September.





If someone asked you to list the best contemporary Metal bands in Britain you'd probably reel off such luminaries as My Dying Bride, Thine, Anathema... and chances are that the name Solstice would surely crop up. With one foot planted firmly in the Doom genre and the other in the legacy of the very best of NWOBHM, this English band could perhaps be described as 'connoisseur's' Metal. Fitted Kitchens cornered main man Rich on their recent Irish tour... but both parties being too imbued with ale to work the dictaphone, let alone formulate coherent questions and answers, it was decided to be for the best to revisit the interview by post. And here, dear readers, be the results. Read on, my children of the grave...

'bout ye, Rich, well met. Did your recent sojourn around this fair isle fair you well?

"Indeed, my good man, we had a jolly marvellous time and shall return in the imminent future once more to bring the power of true Metal."

About the new platter, New Dark Age... It took a couple of spins to get my head around it... when I first heard a couple of the songs on it, I thought 'Fuck me, do these guys have no shame?'. I mean, take Blackthorne... half a minute into it I could have sworn that you were about to break into Simon and Garfunkels' rendition of 'Scarborough Fair' and launch into a fat-bastard folkie's wet-dream. Indeed, I had a growing dread that NDA was going to be a



Solstice: Heavy Fucking Metal (photo: Spandex)

hideously embarrassing affair. However, it hasn't left the death-deck for several days now, and indeed, it's very strength lies in its highly charismatic content.... A rare commodity in

much Metal these days. You've referred to fans of 'new' metal as idiots, and have expressed your dearest wish that your music be as unpalatable as 'cabbage boiled in piss' for them. It's true that people are conned by the mainstream Metal press, and accept any well-hyped crap as something worthy of attention. Are you content to cater for the more discerning end of the market?

"No, I wish to expand and unite the metal scene and then march upon Parliament demanding a one-hour working week for all Metalheads, plus free beer tokens!! But in all seriousness, we have found that as you say, the more discerning end of the Metal market appreciate us more. And that end of the spectrum tends to be those who've been around for 10-15 years. Who knows why? Perhaps they can appreciate where we are 'coming from' and heading... the whole concept of 'Nineties Metal' (soon to be replaced by Kerrang with 'Millennial Metal') is crass, and stinks of shallow hypocrisy. I'm tired of being referred to as 'out of fashion' or 'clashed' for the way I dress or the bands I listen to. In fact, so tired, that this will be one of the last ever interviews I ever do. It seems that most people are content to have their thinking done for them and their musical tastes dictated to them by mainstream magazines. Yawn... how boring. The so called new breed of Metal bands are closer to the 70's disco music than the NWOBHM in my eyes. They are faceless clones wearing designer sports clothes."

Yer most likely to disagree with me here... I'm surprised that most reviews continue to label Solstice purely as a Doom band. From 'NDA' I wouldn't class you at all as primarily doom (though 'Legion XIII', for example, is clearly in that vein), and would argue that you're more of straight Metal act in the British sense of the word. For me, NDA has the epic feel of Maiden (without the over the top bombast) and the self-assuredness and don't-give-a-fuck-what-you-think attitude of Motorhead. What say you to this, and indeed, what is your preferred description for Solstice's vibe?

"Solstice is a Metal band. Heavy Metal. Heavy Fucking Metal. The heaviest. Combining elements of our grand musical heritage, the bands before us (Iron Maiden, Bathory, Candlemass, Brocas Helm, Saint Vitus) we aim only to become even more epic and even heavier. Whatever we say we are, it makes no difference as I'm sure that other people will disagree."

In the quest to better yourself, there's often a danger of trying too hard and ending up with a laughable farce, a parody of one's former self.

Classic examples of this are countless, and include Metallica with their god-awful 'Black album', or Nuclear Assault with 'Out of Order', and Maiden with 'No Prayer for the Dying'. Any

SOLSTICE

fears of Solstice becoming a lazy, generic mess?

"I doubt it. In some respects, we don't try hard enough and as for generic? Well, that's all down to repeating one's self album after album. I think our next one will be as far removed from 'New Dark Age' as 'NDA' was from 'Lamentations'. Personally, I believe that a lot of bands end up as a parody when they begin to believe that they are better than they actually are and act like rock stars. How childish."



The Mozz-man Cometh (photo: Spandex)

I've heard it from several sources that you hold various ex-members in much higher regard than others (that's quite diplomatic phrasing, is it not?). For example, whilst Tom Phillips and John Piras remain brothers in Metal, your opinion of one ex-member remains uncharitable. At the end of the thanks list on New Dark Age, there's the line "No thanks to the traitor-you slimy sodomite bastard- a plague upon you and yours...". Would this, perchance be Shaun Steels, and what's the story?

"None other than that he's a lying sack of shit and boring bastard. We all hate the cunt."

Label changes, personnel changes, all manner of hassles. Some would stoically call it 'character building'. Others a pain the arse. Whatever, it all seems to have paid off for Solstice. How have the 'new' guys (and I use the term 'new' very loosely), Hamish, Moz and Rick, added to the overall Solstice experience in terms of their individual approaches to previously penned material?

"Well, I think that's quite obvious really, we are a much better band all round. In terms of composition and musical ability we just progress a little further each time. The line up has been together for almost two and a half years now, so its not a recent thing. We've had some high points and some low points, but we soldier on and enjoy it whilst we're able."

At the time of writing these questions, you're signed to Misanthropy. What do you make of the acts of the label? I'd argue that the label's strength lies in its more avant-guard acts than in the meat and potatoes Metal acts. For example, whilst Mayhem are undeniably of great influence in any analysis of recent extreme Metal, they are musically suffocatingly-dull.

"I like Mayhem and Primordial, also In The Woods and Endura. As for the rest of the bands, I wasn't too familiar with their music or I didn't like it. It wasn't my label so its not my place to comment on the choice of artists. Misanthropy was quite honestly in retrospect the best label that Europe ever had. In terms of honesty and diversity, I cannot think of any label that could match it, and from the bottom of my heart I thank Tiziana, Antoinette and Brian for all the work they did for us- HAIL!"

Indeed, where next for Solstice now that Tiziana is calling it a day? Any label action?

"We're signing to Necropolis Records (USA) it seems, also home to Witchery, Usurper etc. they have made an excellent offer and work hard for their bands. If fate sees fit, it will be a fine union indeed."

What is the 'New Dark Age' to you? Is it a title brought about by the end-of-millennium scares and paranoia (e.g. the millennium bug, the likelihood of the Balkans conflict becoming one fuck of a global barney- nb this interview was conducted in May, Ed), or the perception of a general decline in society's standards and behaviours. Is it even something of a perverse longing, to see society go through a period of turmoil and get a right good toe up the arse? After all, opening NDA with a passage from Lovecraft's 'The Call of Cthulhu' suggests that



Frontal Assault on Belfast (photo: Spandex)

you hold a fairly jaded view of humanity and it's all-too evident limitations.

"The new dark age is already upon us, like starving dogs we squabble over scraps of meat in these, the very last years of mankind's reign. There is no hope for us as a species, and yes I believe that external and arcane forces are at work to usurp our foothold on civilisation. In a way, maybe this could be a blessing as we are so decadent that we have become a cancer on the face of the planet for the most part.

However, I prepare to fight to retain my freedom in the turbulent times ahead."

'Fitted Kitchens' prides itself on being a sort of coffee-table, lifestyle and human interest zine (yeah, right), so let's move onto yourself, the man behind it all. Paint us a picture of your formative Metal years, from hormone-laden heavy metal adolescence through to Solstice. Um, and yeah, this is where the predictable Sore Throat issue may arise.

"There's nothing really to tell, like most people I got into the scene through tape trading and listening to records at older kids' houses, bands such as Motorhead, Sabbath, Venom, Metallica, Exodus, Slayer etc in the mid eighties, along with loads of obscure extreme hardcore, blah blah. Put it this way, I went to my first gig in 1981 (Discharge, The Exploited, Chron-gen, and Anti-Pasti) I was 12 years old, nearly 13, and was scared stiff by all the older kids. Over the years, I look back and I'm glad, as if I hadn't gone I would never have stuck it out and had the dream of playing in a band myself. For the record, I'm nearly 31 years old now, and some of the best bands I have ever seen live are Discharge, The Exploited, Broken Bones, The Damned, Motorhead, Candlemass, Trouble, Saint Vitus, The Obsessed, Nuclear Assault, Nasty Savage, Slayer, Obituary, Mau-Maus, Sacrilege, Napalm Death, Subhumans, Judas Priest, Chaos UK etc etc. A right old mixture of hardcore punk and Heavy Metal! Although the two most important gigs of my life would be the Discharge one in 1981 and Saint Vitus in 1990. All these bands gave me hope that there was and is a solution/ alternative to musical mediocrity."

Define the appeal of DOOM to the non-believers reading this article. Is it the truly the path to sonic fulfilment?

"Doom Metal is what it is, for years the last bastion of the true Heavy Metal spirit and a tiny but close knit scene of dedicated fans and bands. To a certain extent it remains the same, but I have hope that it will outlive every trend going and survive the turmoil. I cannot explain the appeal of Doom in words, it is a feeling (and to a certain extent an attitude), it is also very varied

musically with each band interpreting the original Sabbath mould in their own way: Iron Man, Revelation, Solstice, Warning, Candlemass, Warcry etc, all sound different to me... Anyone interested in the scene should check out the 'At the Mountains of Madness' sampler and the two 'Dark Passages' samplers. A good starting place to be sure."

The 'Miskatonic Foundation'.... Explain the what's, whys and hows!

"The Miskatonic Foundation is my own label which is dedicated to preserving the tradition of classic doom and true Metal. Apart from the 'At the Mountains of Madness' sampler, and the Twisted Tower Dire 'The Curse of Twisted Tower' CD, I shall release full lengths by Warning and While Heaven Wept, a new MCD by Twisted Tower Dire (who are the US Metal gods in the vein of old Maiden and Blitzkreig) and maybe a Blessed Realm CD. I would also like to release CDs by Brocas Helm (USA) and God's Tower (Russia), both of whom epitomise individuality and the Metal spirit!! The Twisted Tower Dire CD is ten pounds sterling post paid anywhere- get it! Its awesome!"

Rich, cheers for your time and patience, I raise my foaming ale horn to you. Any messages for the readership of this rag, and to your Irish fans in particular?

"Thanks for the interview, hail to all who came to the shows and hail to Primordial and Waylander for playing too!"

Solstice are Rich Walker (guitar), Moz Ingram (vocals), Hamish Glencross (guitar), Lee Netherwood (bass) and Rick Buddy (drums).



DEMONIC INVOCATION!

OK, you deth-riders from hell, it's Demonic-Invocation time again, that time when Fitted Kitchens digs deep into its hoard of cassettes etc obtained over the last year to check out what's happening in the real world beyond our office. A couple of demos date back to '97, being included because they represent the latest recording by the band. Typically, I've no idea what the price is for most of the demos, so its best to write first and inquire instead of just chancing it with a couple of quid in the post. Support yer local scene ye bastards!

(all reviews by Spandex)

Kicking things off are Dundalk's **MANIFEST**, a four piece which manages to contain three guys called Damien which is a very Omen-esque and Metal start. There's a definite 90's feel to a lot of the structures over the three songs on 'Before the Silence' (1998), with a strong hardcore approach to many of the choruses, but woahhh... these guys have clearly listened to some serious speed/thrash in their time and this comes across in a series of excellent guitar workouts. The opener isn't the best on offer, but 'Breed the Fumes' and 'Psycho Mind' are extremely impressive. With the songs being short sharp metal shocks, there's no danger of boredom setting in. Tightly played, I'd imagine they'd come across well in the live setting. They also include a decent press pack with their demo, something which most bands stupidly forget to do.

...thrashing furiously at their heels are England's **VIOLATION**, with their 'Beneath the Steel Sky' CD demo (1997). Well, Violation put themselves about a bit, the slappers, and each song has a clearly distinct grounding which does make for some inconsistency of quality for this listener. Opener, 'Why?' is a powerful razor-sharp piece of melodic death Metal riff-erama, which is a great opener with an excellent speed-Metal frashy bit in the middle. But then it goes horribly wrong for the next 2 songs. Why? Because they're too 'woolly hat'. 'Monochrome man' is infested with Machine Head squeaky geetar and retarded, puffed-out-chested HC shout-a-longs. 'Beneath the Steel Sky' is an arse Chaos-AD Sepultura Metal-by-numbers affair. Both are simply utterly boring. It's only a matter of time before everyone is sick to death of the 'new breed' Metal scene, and Violation won't do themselves any favours by nailing their colours to the mast of this sinking vessel. Thankfully, closer 'Endless Hate' is a KLEAR KLASSIK in the making. Get those neck-braces ready. Think of Sodom's 'Unwanted youth' with a dash of Motorhead's grease and you'll get a good idea of the sheer Metal madness this song offers. If this doesn't have you thrashing round yer bedroom like it's 1988, it will seriously call into question your reputation as a deth-rider from hell. For this song alone, I recommend this as one of the best demos at present. Add 'Why?' and it becomes essential.

EPOCH's 'Inside an Open Space' (1999)

stands out for its to-hell-with-limitations approach and intelligence. Whereas many acts these days are all too content to merely ape their heroes and churn out drivel of the most alarming type, Epoch have trodden the less-walked path and gone wherever the hell they pleased. Despite, or perhaps because of, their low-profile, this Irish act has advanced at a startling pace, and surely deserve a great deal more interest. A collection of live, new and old songs, the demo displays influences ranging from the obvious (Hawkwind) to the less so (Van der Graaf Generator, Robert Fripp, Skrew). This very harsh and progressive (yes, I did say progressive) extreme Metal is the business. The melting pot fares well, resulting in intelligent and inspired songs. One of those rare demos that demands participation from the listener and makes an indelible imprint on the grey matter. Closing off the demo is a bizarre live interpretation of Led Zep's 'Whole lotta love', which mutates into the Sab's 'Symptom of the Universe', a fitting choice for these stargazers. Whilst it's a criminal shame that Epoch haven't pushed that bit further and put out a good digital recording of this, it is still essential listening for the discerning Metallur.

With songs nosing the 7-minute mark, it's vital that Dublin's **DREAMSFEAR** grab yer attention. Do they? Well, I'll say now that 'Ruins' is the wrong choice for opener, being the weakest song on this CD demo (1998). However, it does give a good taster of what's to come in the melodic side to Dreamsfear which is where their strength clearly lies. Think along the lines of Metallica's 'Orion', but more particularly Onslaught's epic 'Welcome to Dying', and you've got a clear idea of what I mean. By the time you get to closer 'Burning Bridges' (which, thank Hades, ain't a cover of that exorable Status Quo granny-pleaser), you know that this is a demo you'll be listening to for a quite a while to come. It's also the song where the sometimes ropey vocals work best.

For some reason, I didn't listen to this next demo for ages when I first got hold of it, and it gradually sunk to the bottom of my cardboard box demo filing system. Then, in a fit of Sunday afternoon ennui, when I was rearranging the contents alphabetically (yes, I am that sad... hey, why do you think losers like me write these damn zines?) I re-found it and slammed it into the stereo. Ye gods, what I blunder I'd made in neglecting this little diamond. 54th's 'Greed' (1997) is another fantastic demo (Jesus, we're doing well this issue) In terms of the vibe grinded out by this Northampton 4-piece, think Carcass (Heartwork-era) as the principal reference point, with incidental Slayer-esque bits, such as at the end of 'Fight'. Mmm.. And with songs clocking in at the three minute mark, it's enjoy to hold the ear of even the most attention-deficient amongst you. Lyrically, 54th are firmly on the socially-aware side of the dungeon, with topics covered including the global domination of the capitalist system, the inexorable rise of the multi-nationals, the ever-present threat of thermo-nuclear annihilation, consumerism as religion, suicide and other such jollies. Every bit as good as swords and sorcery, and a damn sight more important. More Nuclear Assault, vicar?

MOONFOG's second demo, 'Demonbreed' (1998) thankfully pisses all over their not very good '97 debut 'Raven Lord'. Yup, this

Wicklow blackeft metal three piece have definitely learnt new tricks and it shows in the quality of several songs here. The whole thing is much tighter (oo-er) this time round and the vocals in particular have become more impressive, and indeed intelligible. 'Ancestors of the North' is a highpoint, as is 'Winter's Sign' where Moonfog get groovy... well, almost as groovy as evil dudes are allowed to be. The sound quality isn't too bad, but is a bit muddy and this robs them of considerable power. Plus, they would do well to get a second guitarist to beef up that waspish geeter sound and make a more in yer face sound. Ok, its still fairly generic stuff (ie think Immortal), but it bodes extremely well, and with a bit more shade and colour the next one should be truly monstrous. Definately a band to keep an eye on.

Entitling your demo 'Nondescript?' (1999) is asking for it... but whatever post-modernist irony **DYING SUN** were thinking of, its easy fodder for the lazy reviewer to simply say 'Indeed it is'. Fortunately for these impressionable young Scots, we at Fitted kitchens towers are too professional to stoop to such a glib witticism. OK, this three song demo definitely ain't the best I've heard (eg one song, 'F.E.A.R.' is COMPLETE shite, guitars are all over the place etc), but it does have its moments. The vocals are the strongest thing on offer here, which is unusual in demo land. Imagine, if you will, a 'slacker' Glen Danzig... an Evil Elvis in a lumberjack shirt. But that don't mean grunge drivel. 'Half Mast' takes the Danzig-isms a bit further, as after a minute it adopts a definite Misfits-y groove, though whether by design or by chance is anyone's guess. Opener 'Slagwaste' is alright, but they really need to tighten the whole affair up.

Anyone who read issue one of this here rag will recall that the debut demo from the ever-so-slightly-eccentric **MEADS OF ASPHODEL**, 'The Bemoaning of Metatron' received rave reviews for its sheer weirdness (Black Metal with harpsichords and sitar leadbreaks etc). Well, demo number three, 'The Watchers of Catal Huyuk', has just been vomited forth and this act's star remains clearly in its ascendancy. This demo sees the Meads moving towards a more grandiose sound, with the gimmickry on a much tighter rein this outing... well, ok, a bit of a tighter rein then. However, the pick of the songs here at Kitchens Towers is the mad cover of GBH's 'Give Me Fire' which does surely rock in a most Metal fashion (check out that delicious bass sound).

It's always a thrill to go down to empty the post vault and discover goodies from far-away fields. Australian Death Metallers **EXCARNATED** have laid down one hell of a symphony of sickness on their 'Let the Hatred Manifest' demo (1998). With an amazingly clear production, this tape blasted its way out of the Fitted Kitchens speakers for many's a day when it arrived. Pure unrelenting Death (influences clearly include Bolt Thrower etc) with all manner of scene-of-crime samples etc. I wouldn't be surprised if this had been label financed.

Standing out for its excellent playing is Glasgow's **DAG MORA**. Their CD demo 'Chaos Breed' (1997) is more of an EP affair, with the five songs being highly produced. Instrumentally, Dag Mora are on the ball, with

a flair and confidence to their power-ish Metal that bodes well for these guys. The vocals are a bit more of a mixed affair as Paul can surely sing well, but needs to put more balls into it on occasion methinks. Influences? Well, there's a bit of a Megadeth ('Angry Again') riff in opener 'No Dawn, only Darkness', which should give you some idea. Not extreme Metal by any yardstick, but worth a listen. A pleasing touch is the inclusion of a lyric transcription with the demo.

Another demo from Australia is from **HIGHROAD NO. 28**, the solo project of one Andrew Cantwell. His CD demo, 'Obscure Madness' (1999) is a concept affair, based around introspective issues of persistent mental disorder and pain, with some of the five tracks interspersed by psychiatric samples. The music itself is very impressive, with a real heavy undertow and fat as fuk sound, which nods towards Entombed and Sepultura on occasion.

You want yer Doom as heavy as a sack of spanners? Suffering from a bit too much joie de vivre? Well, the second and latest demo from Ireland's **MOURNING BELOVETH** should meet requirements exactly. 'Autumnal Fires' (1998) will surely dispel any vim or vigour you may have left in yer miserable life and reduce you via its audio attrition to a dried husk. Mourning Beloveth conjure up soundscapes of such despair and hopelessness that it would make fitting backing music at the place where souls go to die. Good-time easy listening this ain't. Nor is it cheesy listening, as MB have

developed their own unique sound that they first inflicted on us so hypnotically on their '96 debut. And clocking in at a mighty forty-five minutes, you would have to be a much sadder wretch than I to be able to consume it in one sitting. Just what the doctor definitely didn't order.

North Yorkshire has spawned some very progressive Metal over the past decade, what with luminaries such as Paradise Lost and My Dying Bride. **THE ENCHANTED** continue in this rich and fertile vein with their 'Freedom to Perceive' demo (1999) and create soundscapes bordering on the breathtaking. Their vibe is very English in the way that Solstice would be, ie in terms of ambience and delivery, and the three songs on offer here must be heard if you're into Gothic-ish ambient Metal with some big balls. The female vocals are delicious.

Death Metal can be tedious, can be dull and can be simply crap. All too often, it's generic bullshit with dead-end grunting and double-bass blattering and not a great deal else. Fortunately, South England crew **SEVENTH CHILD** have avoided the common traps and pitfalls and have exhumed a particularly brutal feast of gruesome death on their 'Butchery of the Innocent' cassette (1998). Hellish vocals (that guy's throat must be well fucked), razorsharp geetars and well paced song structures. Hell's teeth, there's even space for some shade and colour amongst the brutality, making for an amazing amount of groove a charismatic listen. Death is indeed sexy again.

WWWKITCHEN

Welcome to WWWKITCHEN our newest addition to the FKOTLD family. The first 5 links are the top 5 links of this issue which are Motorhead, The BNR Metal Pages (Cool), Razor, GG ALLIN (check this out if you can!) and a wonderful MP3 site for finding all your fave tracks.

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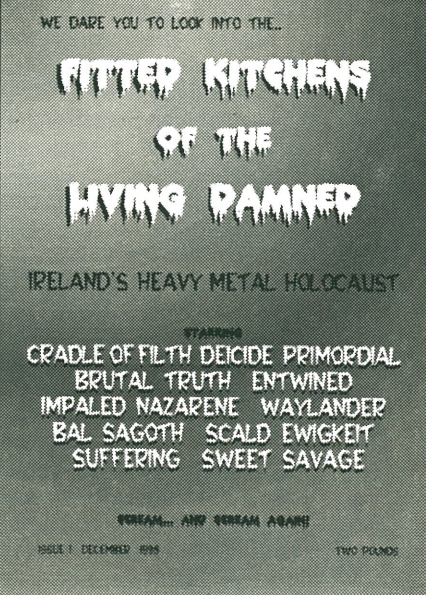
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<http://www.clubi.ie/primordial/arcanesun.html> (links to other Irish bands here)
<http://www.heavymetal.miningco.com>

and a wonderful search engine
<http://www.cyber411.com>

SEND YOUR DEMOS TO FITTED KITCHENS OF THE LIVING DAMNED!

nb. Fitted Kitchens has a firm policy re. demo reviews. Unlike some album releases from signed acts which we consider to be fetid arse, and which we will gleefully put the boot into, we will not do so for demos. Why? Cos in a country like Ireland where interest in the local scene is often minimal and where it is extremely difficult to build up an appreciable following on the back of limited gig opportunities, it simply wouldn't be fair. If we think its shite or too flawed, we prefer not to review it rather than to rubbish it. Simple as that. Instead, we will wait until subsequent demos are available before passing any damning judgement.

The bottom line is that demo bands will always be given a second chance. Signed bands should simply know better.



As you may or may not know there is only a few (i.e. Fuck all) copies of the collectable and rare first issue of FKOTLD left if you are not the proud owner of one then send £2
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AFTER THE RECORDING: Joe Solo Lecat's Big Throbbing Tips!

So you have done the perfect demo. What now?

The next stage depends on cash, format and distribution available to you. You could do a 1000 tapes of mediocre quality and spend the rest of your days explaining how heavy it was on the DAT (Digital audio tape) or CD or whatever. An important thing to do is to get it "Mastered". The correct term is actually "Pre-mastering" as it happens before Mastering. Get out your LP's and CD's and see who did the "Mastering", the same few names keep appearing. So what is "Mastering" well you take your DAT or 1/2 inch tape (Analogue tape version of DAT) along to a recognised mastering house where any last minute editing, EQ (Equalisation), compression or 1960's value limiters are used to beef up your incredibly heavy sound (put on any old Motorhead LP and watch the meters if you have them go right up to 0dB and stay there til the track is over... beautiful) to an even heavier sound. They also master to a specific requirement for the final destination format i.e.

there is different mastering for Cassette CD Vinyl and MiniDisc. There is no Mastering house in Ireland, North or South despite rumours. If you can't afford to go abroad then don't despair there are some magic boxes out there the T.C. Finalizer is probably the best known one (I haven't used it but I'm told its a beauty). Other companies that make similar magic boxes are SPL, BBE and dBX. This gear can be hired quite reasonably and the results are devastating. This is an essential part of the recording process that is often overlooked.

So now a brief description of the formats that litter our bedrooms with our favourite artists cut copied or pressed into them.

Cassette or be damned

As a general rule metal (heavy ...black) does not sound well on cassette (the Frequency Response is 40Hz to 15Hz) in fact for years it was only available on vinyl. But there are always exceptions. Your average KDT C60 is far superior in quality than a manufactured tape. Cassette manufacture is generally done with a 1/2 inch loop bin master (a piece of tape with your hard faught creativity on, as it is on the cassette i.e. side 1 forward and side 2 on backward so both sides of the tape are recorded at the same time and if its done at high speed the tapes can be prone to vari-speed problems (speeding up and slowing down on the finished cassette). After all that if you still insist on cassettes try and get them digitally duplicated, which means it is digital right up until the transfer. CO₂ tapes are definitely more sibilant than normal cassettes so they will reproduce your sonic master piece nearer its intended state, save the extra hiss.

Vinyl is dead!!!!

Well there has been a concerted effort to kill it off (its cheaper and quicker to produce

CD's so record major companies can make more profit) but once again the minority music's metal, punk, ska, dub and dance scenes are avid promoters of vinyl. One of the most important things about vinyl is the weight: 180 gram is good thick fuck off vinyl and the minimum requirement, as the louder your record the deeper the groove cut and so the "land" (bit of vinyl between grooves) needs to be bigger and therefore less music can be recorded on your side 1, side 2 or inversely the longer the album the quieter the recorded music.

500 12" records can be made for about the same price as 500 CD singles. The debate has been raging for years that vinyl is warmer, better, heavier than CD. Well folks there is something in it. Vinyl is strange, it's cut (disk cutting) with lots of treble added and then it replays (through filters in your phono amp stage) with lots of bass (I could fill a few pages with technical crap so just go with it). But the most interesting thing is that vinyl is less responsive around the ears most sensitive range 1KHz - 4KHz so i.e. it will be less harsh and so more warm. Vinyl suffers from so many imperfections i.e. wow, flutter, rumble, surface noise, but these are possibly what is most appealing about it.

CD coup d'etat

Next the CD beast launched by Philips in 1982ah how quickly we forget. No its true CD hasn't been here forever but it has become a major force in the metal world. Right now we are all out there buying albums that we already have for the coveted digitally remastered sticker and a few token tracks that were too shite to be on the original LP. But you ask: is it sacrilegious to listen to Vol. 4 with no crackle pops, wow or even flutter and louder than it previously could have been? At last you have arrived at the standard 20Hz to 20KHz frequency response. The concern about CD's is that its it produces high end frequencies that affect the brain. They also cause ear fatigue due to the more ideal response.

If you can't afford to manufacture CDs you could go for the CDR angle. It only makes sense to get 20-30 copies done as they can be expensive for more than that and don't forget about the mastering !! The CDR myth's explained, yes it is the same as CD quality if it is made to "red book specs" CDR are delicate pieces of shit.

1. Don't leave them in the sun.
2. They are not as infallible and ever lasting as you might expect.
3. Older CD players don't like them.
4. Older slower CD-ROM drives don't like them.
5. A lot of car multi-changer CD players don't like them neither.
6. Make sure the CDR is "closed" or CD players won't be able to read it either.

Stone dead forever

There are some newish technologies around, Mini-Disc and DCC. As with DAT (DAT is the tape version of CD but it does have fastforward and rewind issues), Mini-Disc and DCC started life as yet another CD quality replacement for cassette tape for the consumer market and after each of them flopped they found a niche i.e. DAT was taken on by the Recording industry, Mini Disc by radio stations for adds and jingles and as far as I know DCC has lost its way all together. The difference between all 3 of these formats is DAT does not use compression the others do. I'm not talking about compressing a bass drum, this type of compression is data compression i.e. squashing your song to fit it in a smaller space. Because the compression is encoded (recording) and decoded (playback) different machines may decode differently. Now a lot of people have gone and bought Mini-Disc players and they work fine but I wouldn't mix anything on to it for a final master. (Most, not all, Manufacturing companies won't take them) But it has its good points. It's as easy to use as CD it's great for recording gigs, outdoor work and for recording samples in strange places like factories etc. DCC hasn't happened here at all infact I only know one guy with one (Hi Jay). It sounds great but the scary compression is still there. The frequency response is 20Hz to 20KHz on both.

Caught on the net

And finally into the bold frontier of the net, www, or where you get your porn. Like it or not the www is the cheapest most global, accessible format to reach the masses for any underground movement.

A girl in Australia downloads your track plays it for her friends and suddenly you're a household name. At the moment the two most widely used formats are MP3 and RA, with MP3 being the best at so far. Both formats use compression: surprise surprise. As an average 4 min track is about 40Mb it would take between 20 and 40 hours to download a song depending on your connection. So some people made MP3, it gets your fave Motörhead track down to a mere 2Mb and can be downed in 20 to 30 min and the quality is damn near perfect. A new MP3 player has just been released so you can download MP3's from the net and load your MP3's on to this player. Up to 2 hours of MP3's can be store on there. RA (real audio and video) is a format generally used for audio and video streaming (live: hear it as you download) format and there are some metal stations up there in www land (check out the wwwkitchen section for web links). Needless to say there are other formats on the way in (DVD) and out (Video tape) but at the end of the day you decide what will or won't be the next format of the future. Personally..... give me the second hand vinyl shop any time.

LIVE SONIC ATTACK!

Monster Magnet/ METALLICA, *The Point, Dublin, 5 July 99*

Ah, the joys of media stardom. I didn't get to see drug-addled fiend-muzak that is Monster Magnet, as I was ensconced backstage doing an interview with a certain Mr J Newsted for this very zine. However, a firm-chested young lovely assured me later that it had been a damn fine show. Splendid. I've seen Metallica several times now, and the opening strains of that Ennio Morricone piece from 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly' still gets me pitching a tent with greedy anticipation. Reports from their Dynamo show of a few weeks previous had suggested that Metallica were losing the plot a bit, and it is true that the stadium-rockisms do come across a tad uncomfortably within the confines of the Point Depot. What works in a huge field can seem insincere indoors, and several effects (such as the huge vocal fades on 'The Thing...') and all the 'motherfucker yeah'-isms came across as naff and unnecessary. Metallica are now in the interesting position where their evolution is becoming more credible and logical (having survived the debacle that was the un-credible Black album) and this makes for some surprising results... for instance, eternal crowd-pleaser 'Seek and Destroy' seemed somewhat incongruous, coming across as tired and dated. Equally, some of the newer fayre falls on its arse. Highlights of the set included 'For Whom the Bell Tolls', 'M.O.P.', 'Battery'. A shredding 'Fight Fire with Fire' sees the band bathed in blood red light, flanked by two columns of fire, a truly hellish visage. But special note also goes to 'Bleeding Me' which takes on an impressive menace live, and 'Die Die, my darling' which comes across with a startling intensity and, strange to say, was the highlight of the evening for my handsome self. Come 'Whiskey in the Jar', and James dedicates the song to Phil Lynott's mum who was in the audience that night, before bringing Eric Bell on stage, an inspired event. Overall? It did slay!

Set list: *Breadfan/ Master of Puppets/ Of Wolf and Man/ The Thing that Should Not Be/ Kirk solo/ Fuel/ The Memory Remains/ Bleeding Me/*

Jason solo/ Sanatorium (intro)/ Harvester of Sorrow (intro)/ Seek and Destroy/ For Whom the Bell Tolls/ King Nothing/ Wherever I may Roam/ One/ Fight Fire with Fire. *Encore 1: Nothing Else Matters/ Sad But True/ Killing Time (intro)/ Creeping Death. Encore 2: Die Die, my Darling/ Enter Sandman/ Whiskey in the Jar/ Battery.*

Warning/ Waylander/ SOLSTICE, *The Rosetta Bar, Belfast, 24/4/99*

Many Metal pundits are putting their shekels on Essex Doom-mongers Warning becoming a crowd to watch out for, but they did themselves absolutely no favours this evening. With a set and delivery so dull that I fell into a catatonic abyss, these guys are very very boring. They really need to get a second guitarist to beef up the sound, or even just move around a bit. Something. Anything. Waylander are now at the happy stage where they can get people on the floor by simply getting up on stage and tearing into their first number. Whilst tonight saw the band plagued by the usual sound problems which characterise many of their gigs, it still gets the crowd going bikkies and lets face it, with gems such as 'Born to the Fight', they can't go too far wrong. They've also fleshed the sound out with a second guitarist and Fart still leads the fist banging mania. Thence fell the duty of closing the proceedings to Solstice, and there was always the very real threat that their sheer would render them complete arse live. This was definitely not the case. Moz is possessed with one of the most unique vocals in contemporary Metal and his stage prowling and shape pulling acts as a foil to the firmly-rooted-to-the-floor guitarists. Sterling stuff.

Honey for Christ/ Waylander/ CATHEDRAL, *The Rosetta Bar, Belfast, 15 May 1999*

Can't remember the details, I'd been on the beers since early that afternoon. My hazy recollection of Cathedral being, well, dull have been substantiated by later conversations with more moderate drinkers.

MEET THE KITCHEN STAFF

As we draw to the close of this century, the cult of celebrity has assumed a quite frightening level of insanity. Anyone can be a 'star' these days, and we now have celebrity vets, celebrity game show participants and some woman from a popular gardening TV programme becoming famous purely because she doesn't wear a bra (COOL!!- Mr N.O.D.A.M.F). FKOTLD has not escaped this madness. Impressionable young boys and girls have been writing to us in their droves, wanting to know how they themselves can start up a zine, how to approach record labels, what Mr Nightmare of Doom eats for breakfast, etc etc. Ok, here are some interesting facts. Now fuck off and don't bother us again.

Spandex Oo-er Our erstwhile editor, purely because he's the saddest cunt of us all and as such has the most time to devote to this pointless project. He moonlights in his spare time as an environmentalist and has been a strict vegan for the last 4 years... well, that's his Metal cred flushed down the pan. He's sulking at present because we couldn't find any soya-based inks and organic hemp paper to print this zine on.

Mo Tormentor The red-headed devil with the huge camera that can be observed stalking various gigs and frightening bouncers in Belfast. She was forced to flee her native city of Kiel in 1997 after an unfortunate televised incident in which she publicly (no, this is not a misspelling) humiliated a leading member of the German Government. Do not under any circumstances annoy this woman.

Mr Nightmare of Doom and Motorbike Frenzy Every team will have at least one dysfunctional social spastic; we have this young man. A creature so wretched that he can sit through the entire Joy Division back catalogue and find it to be an uplifting experience. His feeble excuse is that the music made him do it. (nb. Weetabix).

Joe Solosodomiser Le cat is a dirty big halian with a distressing habit of asking schoolchildren if they want to see his puppies. He is persecuted relentlessly by the rest of the otherwise urbane and cosmopolitan Belfast-based FKOTLD team because he is a bony-arsed bog man from the most backward hell hole of this island, County Laois. He once famously turned up for a Slayer gig wearing wellies.





Steve, Lee and Aaron, Belfast 8/4/99 (photo: Mo Tormentor)

PARADISE LOST

Halifax's Paradise Lost have come a long long way from their early incarnation as a bunch of lo-fi deathheads. Some would say they've 'done a Metallica' in recent years, as the band controversially adopted a progressively more electronic sound.

Fitted Kitchens met up with master of mirth Nick Holmes just after the band had been taken around Belfast city for a taxi tour, taking in the sights which include peace-walls, tribal ghettos etc. It was all a source of interest to Nick, who readily admits a fascination with the darker side of life.

Well, I'll get the blindingly obvious question out of the way first. Greg's got his arm in plaster. What happened to him?

Nick sighs "We were on the tour bus, and we were pissed and the bus was moving, and I think it jolted and he just fell backwards and landed on his arm. He's broken his wrist. He'll be out for six weeks so it's fucking shit really, but we have to laugh about it, nothing can be changed".

Andy, PL's drum tech, is at the next table, working away at an acoustic version of 'As I Die'. It transpires that PL would otherwise have been forced to abandon this mini-tour... Nick admits that the band were "fucking lucky" to have this rather talented tech.

You've only played Belfast on two previous occasions... as support to Sepultura in '93 and later by themselves in '96, so there should be a fair crowd here tonight. It won't be a standard PL gig, more a 'showcase' for the new album due out in June. Yet it wasn't advertised as such, and there's likely to be a few fucked off punters tonight wondering just what the hell is going on...

"That's how we wanted to promote it, we wanted to drop the ticket prices, which we did in Cork, but in Dublin it was full fucking price, it was like 'Aw God'. Andy had to learn an hour's worth of music in three hours, people were complaining that we weren't playing along enough, I



Paradise Lost: not on Trey's Christmas card list (photo: Mo Tormentor)

mean for fuck's sake. I think they should stop moaning and get on the fucking stage and do it themselves!"

There's no arguing that you've radically changed and developed your sound over the course of the past six albums. You originally came from the tail end of the 80's British death-doom scene, touring with the likes of the **Electrohippies**, **Hellbastard**, **Napalm Death** etc, and are arguably more from a punk-grindcore genesis than from a more conventional straight-Metal background. PL hasn't always been the easiest band to categorise, and in retrospect you probably did that yourself to a large degree when you called your second album 'Gothic'.

"Yeah. There's still very much a Gothic element to our music, probably more so now than ever before. We just lost the kind of thrash-metal edge that we had adopted earlier"

And the 'urrrghhh' deathly vocals...

"I certainly stopped doing that kind of stuff. I mean, we've done our years of shit our 'Heavy Metal apprenticeship'. We've done all that, and we got to the point

were we went 'hang on, we're getting a bit bored of this, what else can we do?'"

You've just joked about 'the Heavy Metal apprenticeship', but tell us a bit about the earliest days, good tours, bad tours, etc

"Well, if you can get a good support band and the people are you can get on with them and you can have a laugh with them, tourings fine, its just like a travelling party... which is fucking great" Any occasions when Paradise has been shat on by headliners?

"Aw yeah. If you go on tour with bands and they're fucking arseholes, it can turn into one of the worst things ever, it's just horrible. You see these pricks every time you walk in the place"

Care to name names?

"**Morbid Angel**. Fucking dickheads, real bad ego problems" PL, alongside Kreator, toured as support to Morbid Angel in the States back in 1993. By all accounts, the 'Shades of God' era PL went down like a sack of shit with the audiences. I ask Nick to cast his mind back to that delightful experience.

"That was a fucking awful tour. We got on well with **Kreator**, we shared a bus, but there was even conflict there purely because they were speaking German all the time and we were speaking English, a lot of culture got in the way, we were living in each others pockets. We got on well with **Kreator**, they were alright and Mille's a good friend of mine, but I thought **Morbid Angel** were very weird chaps, very bizarre. Very friendly one minute,

next minute they wouldn't even speak to you. They were just, generally speaking, absolute idiots. There's a lot of bands from down that end of America that can be easily on a par with that. The whole mentality of those people is very different to ours"

Rock ego trips and primadonna behaviour is legendary in the Metal world. Do you see yourselves as fairly well grounded?

"Oh yeah. I mean, people can meet you when you're in a bad mood and they'll think you're a prick. I can always allow for that, maybe he was pissed off about something or maybe he had personal problems, you have to give the benefit of the doubt. But after eight weeks with **Morbid Angel**, I can gladly put the stamp on them being dickheads"

Fortunately, Nick is remarkably stoical about it all

"It was good to do it, coz its 'character building', haha. Its always good to have shit thrown at you, it gives you something to talk about. I've got so many stories purely from bad times, you never run out of stories."

Your sound has progressed hugely over the past 10 years. It's well nigh impossible to hear anything from 'Lost Paradise' in 'One second', a trend that will presumably continue when the new album is out. How much of this change has been shrewd calculation and how much logical progress?

"I don't know really. You're influenced by who you listen to when you start, you want to sound like who you listen to, but if you listen to a massive section of bands, I mean, I really love the new **Cardigans** album, but I also love the new **Emperor** one as well... I don't usually listen to Metal at all anymore, but that one really impressed me, I'm playing that a lot at home which is weird for me. It just reminds me of the first wave of **Black Metal** which I was into as a kid."

That would have been more than a while ago!

"Yeah, exactly! But I was into the first wave, so it just reminded me of that again, it was like 'wow' it sound convincing and fresh. But we're into so many different things, so we can nick bits off bands or ideas from bands and no-one would even know who we did it from"

So it's just a matter of becoming more selective, not chaining yourself to one genre or style?

"Definitely. You WILL change your taste in music. You get into Metal when you're younger, but as you get older you will broaden your taste in music. Everybody does, I haven't met anyone who hasn't. When I was seventeen, I was a diehard fucking Death-head, I didn't want to hear anything else. But I did, I broadened my taste. Being in a band helps you do that as well, you certainly open your mind a lot quicker."

PL's had its share of, how shall we say, 'devoted' fans. Nick relates a few tales, including that of a girl in PL's early days who used to photocopy their lyric sheets and hand them out on street corners. Problem is, the dictaphone's refusing to work for several minutes, so none of it gets down on tape. Ah, got it working again...

"There was this other guy in Switzerland, in Switzerland there's always someone who's a bit peculiar, he gave me a date and said he had to show me signs which suggest me as this new messiah, and that I'm going to start this new religion, like a cult leader. Pretty scary actually"

I'd imagine that this sort of thing is par for the course for most bands, who act as targets for the insecure and unstable?

"I'm sure it does, definitely. I think the darker the image of the band, then the more its going to happen. I'm sure **Marilyn Manson** gets all kinds of sad people saying he's the new messiah"

Ah well, serves him right for trying so hard with his image

"Yeah!"

It was pretty weird when I was waiting for this interview, the guy in front of me was Paul Elliot from Kerrang. PL's generally had a very easy ride from the oft-fickle British Metal press, and you've been extremely fortunate in this sense.

"Nothing really comes back to me. I don't really hear that much... if someone said 'I'm a twat, well that's true, so I'm not that bothered. A lot of the time when we're doing interviews for magazines, the people have been journalists for as long as we've been musicians, so we have pretty good relationships. So they kind of know what we would want or would not want published... I mean, when we first started, they used to report all sorts of things and we were like 'why did they say that, why did they print that?!' So to a certain extent, they're like friends, and if we say 'please don't print that!' then they won't... unless they're just like tabloid-type. But we're not in the tabloids... we're not big enough to be covered!"

Let's move onto PL's songs over the years. If you were to name one of your songs that you now think of as shite and utterly embarrassing, what would it be... would it, perchance, be 'Falling Forever'? It must be a prime candidate.

"Yeah, that one!! I was going to say *Falling Forever*, its fucking

toss. Its just stupid, fucking silly"

A desperate filler to complete the second album?

"No, at the time we quite liked it". Nick turns to bassist Steve- "What else is shit?". Steve replies 'Rapture'. "Rapture. There's elements of that that I quite like, but I know what he means." To Steve again, "Is there a shit one on the 'Futures'?" Steve grimaces.

Nick laughs "He doesn't like anything! He hates everything and everybody. But, yeah, *Falling Forever* would be the crowning turd in the waterpipe I reckon".

When you were young and impressionable, in your teens and laden with haywire hormones etc, tell me, how METAL were you?

"I was full-on. That's why we started the band, we were all pretty obsessed with it. I was like that in about 1985/86 when I first started getting into **Metallica**, and I was obsessed with them around the 80's. I saw 'em in 1986 with Cliff Burton, but that's when it was good and fresh and new, and I rapidly got bored with it, you know, so that was my generation, the first time round, so when people give me shit now I can say, 'fuck off, man, where were you?' I was also very much into hardcore punk and lots of American hardcore, like early **Agnostic Front**, **Sick of it All** and I still like all of that stuff now, but it was always the more extreme end that I liked".


Years ago, there was a PL interview in Raw magazine. They'd taken you and Greg to Hamley's, the world famous toy store, and photographed the pair of you surrounded by dolls and puppets looking like the most miserable pair of buggers that have ever walked this earth. It was most amusing, the deadpan shit. But doesn't the miserable bastard tag, the 'Nick Groans' jokes and all that, grate?

"Its true to a certain degree, but I mean, we like a laugh, probably more so than most people to be honest."

Nick Holmes in Happy Bastard shock! Fucking hell, the tape recorder's just started playing up again. The conversation descends into all manner of nonsense whilst I try futilely to get the bastard machine working again before he's herded up by the tour manager with the rest of the band for a Kerrang photoshoot up at sunny Belfast castle. Right... I'm off to get this bloody thing serviced...

Paradise Lost are Nick Holmes (vocals), Aaron Aedy (guitars), Greg Mackintosh (guitar), Steve Edmundson (bass) and Lee Morris (drums).

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Entombed bury Belfast (photo: Mo Tormentor)

entombed

It's often startling to meet guys from big name bands, the sort of acts whose posters have adorned your bedroom walls for the best part of a decade. Frequently, they're simply genuine down-to-earth guys. Much less often, they turn out to be dicks. Fortunately, LG is one of the former. On-stage, he is Metal Monster™. Meet him off stage, and he's entirely different in person, coming across as disarmingly shy and soft-spoken. When you take into account the additional fact that he was nursing a rather nasty hangover (I'd met him propped up against the coffee machine when I turned up at the venue a few hours before the show) and dealing with a strong Northern Ireland accent, the great part of this interview could be described as 'pulling teeth'. The soundcheck was starting around the time that we knuckled down to business, with the chief sound guy was taking great delight in bellowing various profanities and requests for "small boys' arses" through the PA at ear-splitting volume, so we retired to the pub next door for a yarn. And here be the results.



Alex, Entombed's bit of totty (photo: Mo Tormentor)

How's it going LG? This is probably your first interview with an Irish zine, I guess it's the clear highlight of your career so far!

"Yes, could be" grins our Lars.

Ok, baby, let's get down to it. I'm going to ask you a few questions, but before we get down to it, tell me the 3 questions that you're sick to death of and desperately hoping I won't ask you.

"Erm I don't know if there are any bad questions..."

Ok, how about the most boring ones the... How about "Tell me the story of Entombed?"

"No, you expect that question, you know, it's a normal question"

Ok, tell me the potted history of Entombed!

This inspires theatrical groans from LG

"Em, ha! Started back in 1987, with a band called **Nihilist**, made a couple of demos, and then there was an American band called 'Nihilist' so they had the rights to the name, but everybody knew that we were the real Nihilist anyway, so we gave that name to them... they didn't get anywhere anyway ha ha! We changed name to Entombed, made the first record 'Left Hand Path' on Earache, and continued to do so up until 'Wolverine Blues', and then changing labels to Music for Nations and here we are, 12 years later, still doing the same thing"

Considering that Entombed's early line-up history is so convoluted, that's a pretty concise answer by any standards. What do you make of the whole hoo-ha with Earache having released 'Monkey Pus'? I believe that you were less than chuffed?

"Yeah, I mean it's a little bit, you know, when you put down something, you want it to be quality... and this is not. When people spend money on something, they want it to be good. And with that show, it wasn't even that good".

Onto more recent fayre.... Um, on 'Same difference', you appear to have forgotten to use the Entombed™ geeter sound, that really sick sound that you were famed for, and which the likes of **Dismember** so shamelessly copied. Why the decision to do so?

"We just wanted to try something new, something that we've done every record. That guitar sound is good, it's g-o-o-d, and we might get it back, we might not.... But it tended to be too much like a wall, there were a lot of other things in there which you can't hear because of that wall of guitars. So, we tried to get those other things to be a little more "present" and a little more "dynamic"

I guess you've just run the usual gauntlet of the 'sell-out' cries, basically what you've been getting every release since LHP.

"I think people like it, they just always want something to whine about. We do what we do, and, you know, yesterday in Dublin, there was a frenzy, six or seven hundred people in there, so we just experienced positive things, it was great. If you like a band, you follow them and you appreciate what they do"

Tonight's sold out. Last time you played here, back in '97 with **Neurosis** and **Breach**, it was the same story. Over here, we get fuck all 'big' acts, so its little surprise that the crowds flood to such shows.

"Yeah, the last time we played here and Dublin, it was absolutely amazing, yesterday was too, and I hope tonight also. I don't know how many people this place holds... maybe 500, so if its sold out! Last time, I almost died on stage it was so hot. There were three bands then, three bands now, so maybe again. I hope the people here party on Sundays!"

Rest assured they do. So, when are you going to be pressed to Sweden's bosom and revered as cultural icons? Are you, by the Gods, as big as **ABBA**?

"Um, no"

OK, five or six years ago now, there was that whole media keruffle over the fact that some adolescent evil dudes with more free time than sense were discovering the joys of arson. Did the Scandinavian press tend to lump the whole Metal scene together as a mass in reporting?

"Yeah, but it's sad if you burn churches, because they're history, fine buildings and some of that stuff was just kids who want to get attention"

It seems to have been a simple case of 'hey, I'm more evil than you' one-upmanship

"Yeah, burning a church is... childish. Why do that?" LG flashes a quick devil-sign before continuing "It's better to let it stay there and show that, even if its there, you still have **THE POWER** ha ha!"

Sweden has a reputation for radicalism and forward-thinking (save for a few nasty skeletons like its post-war eugenics policy!). The exact opposite of Northern Ireland. What do make of the whole crap over here?

"When we go places that are meant to be crazy or whatever, we don't see any of it. Today, its raining, so I don't want to go out! I can't



LG gets Out Of Hand (photo: Mo Tormentor)

understand why they fight".

Do Entombed get the chicks?

"Mmm, no"

You not pretty enough?

"Sometimes!"

Who's the cleanest, most considerate member when touring?

"Not me! We don't clean that much... get up in the morning, brush your teeth, put the same clothes on again. Excellent!"

Who's the filthiest scumbag?

"Could be me. I can't be bothered"

Before you were an international playboy and rock star, what did you do with your life?

"Went to school. When I was 16, we did our first tour. I have had some jobs, but nowadays this is the full-time job"

A large part of the attention given to the jaw-dropping intensity of Entombed at the start of their career stemmed from the fact that the band was so young, almost like the Swedish equivalent of the US thrashers **Death Angel** at the time of their 'The Ultra-violence' debut. LG sang on Entombed's debut album, *Left Hand Path*, but not at all on the follow up 'Crawl'. He'd been kicked out before recording, and the vocal duties fell to drummer Nicke Anderson. Nicke has, of course, gone on to pastures new. Have you ever had an interview in the past year that hasn't mentioned you-know-who?

"Yeah, that question does keep coming up. But he wanted to do his own thing with the **Hellacopters**, to sing and play guitar and play the music that he liked. Everybody's still friends, its no problem, you shouldn't fight over music"

If you weren't in Entombed, what band what you like to be singing for? Which band would give you a major stiffy?

"No idea. Those bands already have a singer who sounds great. No idea, I don't know"

About six years ago, Sweden was considered to be THE Death Metal mecca (**Entombed**, **Dismember**, **Unleashed**), then Florida had its turn (**Morbid Angel** being the main men), then it was back to Sweden for a second go (**Amon Amarth**, **Opeth** et al). What's happening now?

"Fff... I don't know, it's a little bit less because the underground is totally gone I think"

Why say that? Are people simply no longer interested?

"No, they are. But you had demos before... now you can throw a demo directly onto a CD... and then its not underground anymore. There are still great bands going, like **Dismember** or **The Haunted**. Metal's still alive. As originators grow up, start doing something else, there's another generation coming forward so its always going to be there"

Do Entombed sup and fornicate with The Horned One?

"No, we're quite boring in that sense... I'm ruining your questions!" (laughs)

Last night, the clocks went forward one hour but I didn't find out until this afternoon. I was sitting at home, having a cup of tea, and leisurely thinking up questions to ask, and I suddenly realised I was late. Because of that, I've run out of questions; care to think of any and pretend that you're interviewing Entombed?

LG grimaces and laughs "Oh, no idea! I've never interviewed anyone before, ha ha. Um, I've no idea. That was a tough question!"

Yeah, it's the dreaded hangover demon at work! Ok, before we close off, any closing messages for the readers of NI's only Metal zine?

"It's a great country to come to. The people are great here, they love drinking and seem to be into their Metal. It's great. KEEP THE METAL UP!"

STYLE COUNCIL

1; THE STUDED WRISTBAND.

Easily the epitome of Metal cool.

Bruce Dickinson wore them as he toured the world on the 'Number of the Beast' tour. James Hetfield spent most of 1984 with a rather girly mini-bulletbelt around his wrist. The Great Kat and Bolt Thrower's Jo Bench looked tasty with them. Cronos didn't quite manage. Ah, the studded wrist band. Seldom has such a completely cool, yet so thoroughly pointless, an accessory been witnessed in the world of Metal.

The original idea behind the studded wrist band was to reflect something pagan/ medieval (without going too far like the idiots in Manowar or Armored Saint) with punk/fetishist overtones. This Medieval influence was of course taken to its (il)logical conclusion by Saxon in 1986 when they dressed up as Knights for their 'Crusader' era shows (Biff surely deserves a fashion slot devoted entirely to himself).

The nail-bracelet

But the wrist band was sported with such flair and panache by one individual that it has become a de rigeur fashion accessory for thousands of Extreme Metal aficionados across the globe. That great man is, of course, Slayer's Kerry King. Kerry wore a huge one, and customised the humble wrist band into the epitome of thrash cool. With nails. Fucking big ones at that. Wearing this was the equivalent of tying 2 kilogram bags of sugar to your lower arm before playing a one hour set of furious Metal. When our Kerry got it surgically removed in '89 after having thrashed his way through 4 albums, he excitedly told the world that he now found it easier to play guitar. Hmm.

But Kerry's spiked wrist bands live on today as his main legacy to all things Metal. Look, if you will, at US extreme Metallers Vital Remains, or Swedish Deathsters Dismember. Perhaps the most avid dangerous young dudes to sport this fine accessory were the participants of what I may as well call out of pure laziness, the Second Wave of Scandinavian Black Metal (SWSBM... yeah, another anacronym to add to yer ever expanding collection). But of course, they haven't a shred of humour or irony between them (remember, these are the guys who famously didn't realise that Venom were joking), and so they just look like dicks. No style or flair whatsoever, shame really.



Next issue: an investigation into why most US Death Metal bands in 1993 thought that wearing jogging pants on stage could ever be cool.

epoch

Its not often that a Metal act comes up with a sound that really causes you to sit up and pay attention, yet this is exactly what Northern Ireland's **Epoch** have managed to achieve. To listen to Epoch is to transcend all the self-imposed boundaries of Metal and head off on a voyage into the sonic other-world. Check this act out if you think your intelligence can handle it.

Formed in late 1995 as a bit of a mess-around side-project, Epoch became mainman Jason's full-time musical project after he left **Waylander** and is today possibly the most avant-garde Metal act in the whole of Ireland. Fitted Kitchens met him one fine summer's afternoon in Belfast (I'd been told to look for the guy with the **Manowar** t-shirt at the train station...) and headed to the nearest imbibing emporium for what turned out to be several hours enjoyable chat... impossible to squeeze into this rag, so its all been a tad edited down. Enjoy.

Ok, big man, tell us how Epoch came about

"Well, we were playing every Saturday night just for a laugh and getting drunk, but immediately developed the Epoch sound. We started layering electronic sound effects over heavy riffing... we were very influenced by 70's Progressive rock such as **Pink Floyd, King Crimson, Van Der Graf Generator, Emerson Lake and Palmer, Hawkwind** etc, and we were trying to fuse it with extreme Metal. We more or less got the sound immediately"

I did ask Jason to outline the early history of Epoch but its such a complex web of personnel changes and swaps that its far too long to transcribe here... suffice to say that it would put the nascent Entombed to shame. Several demos have been released, the latest one being the sonic head-fuk 'Inside an Open Space'. Anyhows, we've got the whiskeys in, lets crack ahead. It would be quite difficult to describe Epoch's music by using just one or two well-known band as reference points, you certainly can't be described as 'generic'.

"We're very much appreciated for our originality. At the end of the day, its just a sea of un-originality out there, all contempo-

rary bands have the same drum sound etc"

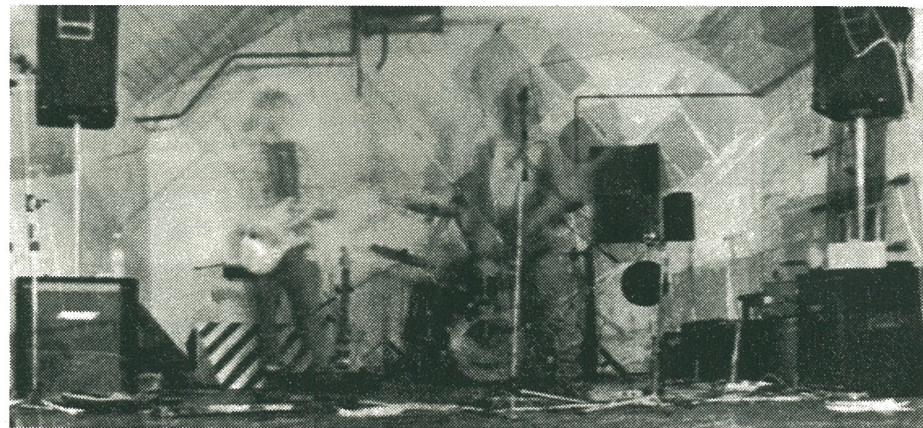
Yet for many bands, all they want is to sound like their heroes. I know a sound engineer who worked with a band who said 'we want to sound like **Immortal**.. and their demo does sound like Immortal. They're happy, the engineer's happy...

"Well, our influences are more varied. I have completely different musical tastes to Johnny, we're very antagonistic which maybe has something to do with it. There's no single band that we wish to ape, we're just trying out different things. If I like something, I'll take a little slice of it and put that in, not just take's a band's sound"

It's undoubtedly progressive stuff, and in the past you've already cited the likes of Hawkwind, Van der Graf Generator etc as being major influences, but there's also some more recent stuff that I can hear, like **Robert Fripp and Voivod**, a lot of experimentation, and perhaps **Rush** though I terms of technicality rather than sound. Are there any influences that I may have overlooked? Like, are you going to shock readers by citing the Bee-Gees or anything?!

"Ha ha! Absolutely anything influences us. **The Beatles and Led Zeppelin** have a lot to answer for... 'When the Levee Breaks', that drums sound, we're trying to get that sound. We can break free of that riff-chorus-solo thing, there's no boundaries. Most bands are frightened to break the rules; we have a blatant disregard for them!"

Jason's in no rush to get Epoch material completed and will happily spend ages on a particular piece until he is happy with the overall sound and vibe. He's also very



conscious of the need to impart an atmosphere through music...

"We're planning to go into the forest to record an acoustic interlude for our new material, just to get that quintessence. Me and Johnny, we're very into the 'Led Zep' thing; they did their first album on the lawn outside this country mansion. If you listen carefully, you can actually hear a plane going overhead during 'The Battle of Evermore'. It's to try and get that sort of atmosphere that no one else can"

Hmm... Epoch are a bunch of stargazing hippies. Is this not a fair accusation? "Hmm, let me think... stargazing, aye, I suppose so! I do gaze at the stars very often, it's a good thing to gaze at the stars. So 'stargazing hippies'... whatever!"

You claim to hold quite a jaded view of humanity. I think it was Bernard Brecht who



said 'Hell is other people'...

"Personally speaking, I am very much a misanthrope. I spend a long periods of time by myself, I'm not a sociable person. I don't know whether this is entirely to the benefit of my organism... maybe I should get out more often. Yes, hell is other people. If you take a good look at your life, most of your problems are caused by other people."

Your recordings thus far have been consistently lo-fi. Is this simply due to that old chestnut, a lack of cash, or is it a deliberate decision to keep the sound raw?

"Well, with the first one there was an accident with the master tape and so all copies had to be duplicated from an ordinary cassette tape, but the quality was fucking bad to start with anyway. The second one, 'Inside an Open Space', wasn't that bad, but wasn't that good either. The recording that we're about to delve into now will have a super top-notch production job (Jason had done all previous ones

himself- Ed). But at the end of the day demos, by their very nature, are a demonstration of your music, the production doesn't really have to be that good. A lot of these brutal Death Metal bands, they can all play really really well and a get a top-notch production demo done, but their music's just bland crap."

As k Jason to discuss the concepts behind Epoch's songs and he'll

reel off an impressive reading list, ranging from the likes of CS Lewis to Michael Moorcock. But how about political and social awareness?

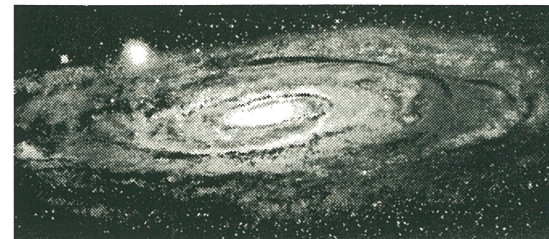
"I'm obsessed by politics. Lyrically speaking, in my younger days I was trying to right the wrongs of the world, trying to express all that. Lyrically, Epoch would be removed from that. On the first Waylander tape, there's one song that I wrote the lyrics for; it was about the problems in Northern Ireland, the 'tit-for-tat' sectarian shootings, stuff like that, sort of going 'oh no, this is wrong, this is wrong'. But, on reflection, it was maybe a little naive. Lyrically, I've moved on and Epoch is just on a deeper level. Maybe I will try to get some social awareness in."

It is frustrating that people constantly expect bands from Northern Ireland to write solely about 'the Troubles', and bands as di-

verse as **Therapy?**, **The Divine Comedy** and **the Undertones** have been attacked in the music press for not doing so. Living day in day out in this place, its annoying to see people trying to oversimplify what goes on here. In that respect, if you did want to make a valid and articulate point, it may be best to phrase it in more ambiguous or vague manner to avoid glibness.

Jason, do you subscribe to any particular world-view or set of values?

"No. Philosophically and religiously speaking, I absorb everything. I'm reluctant to say this, given the current climate of Heavy Metal, but I'm very well educated in matters of the occult. Not to say that Epoch are an occult band or blah, anything like that, that's just me personally".



'Space is deep, and is so endless...'

People like Anton La Vey have put an articulate case for 'Satanism' essentially meaning 'challenging' and 'independent thinking', a far cry from the teenage dickhead out desecrating graves. It's a lot more subtle a mindset than is often given credit...

"Yes. Nowadays, people have such a narrow viewpoint, its just either Christianity or rebellion against it. All these 'Satanists' have just turned Christianity on its head, they confuse the politics with the philosophy."

Getting back to Epoch's activities, let's talk about gigging. Is it fair to say Epoch don't?

"You could say that. We have played at the last two summer solstices, but just at sort of piss-ups with friends... I operated all the sound effects with foot triggers, very complicated, but we pulled it off. But as you said, we don't really gig; due to our revolving lineup, we've never really got round to it"

It all sounds very **Bathory!** "Well, we were on the very verge of gigging before our previous guitarist left. But watch this space! We may get more musicians, but at the minute we're quite content to stay in the studio. I got a bit disillusioned playing live whilst with Waylander... if you're playing to a crowd that doesn't appreciate it, its just a waste of your time. But, you never know..."

What do Epoch do by the cold light of day?

"I'm involved in the meat industry, in

a food safety laboratory. For the readers, I'm being interviewed by a vegan... He is disgusted! But he's wearing leather boots..."

Ah, well my line of defence would be to say, its better to reuse than buy new, maan!

"Johnny has just finished a music course and is now 'resting'. Kim, our semi-guitarist, is doing a course in sound engineering"

Useful people to have involved indeed. What do you make of the Irish Metal scene?

"I don't really think hat there's a 'scene' of such, just a few dozen people who know each other basically. A few good bands... **Primordial, Thy Sinister Bloom**, the now-defunct **Lesshelp**, I liked them. Generally speaking, the Irish scene is very bitchy... that doesn't do anyone any good. I don't know what it is about the scene, but it always was, and always will be, bitchy"

Though that's no worse than a mutual backslapping, happy-clappy scene... that would be insufferably dull

"Ah! I'll take all that back, there's nothing wrong with bitching, ha. It makes the scene interesting... all that bitchin' and slobberin', people love it, its good fun, aye."

OK, well what next from Epoch?

"Well, in the immediate future we're going into the recording studio. We're pulling all the stops out on this one, its going to be mental. We're also going to start posting tapes to record labels now, which we'd never done before. We did manage to get some label interest and a good write-up in Terrorizer magazine without haven't sent them tapes, which was pretty good going. The new recording will take a few months, and hopefully we'll have something that'll be listened to by a wider audience than a few hundred. I don't care if I never make any money off it, its purely artistic. I'm in search of that artistic high, the buzz you get off good art is amazing"

Well, hopefully I'll be getting an earful of that sooner rather than later. Ok, cheers for the beer and answers... now get yer arse out of the pub and get cracking on the vibes.

"Thanks very much Spandex, I wish you the best of luck with the Fitted Kitchens of the Living damned. Hold yer fist up high for Metal! Thank you and goodbye"

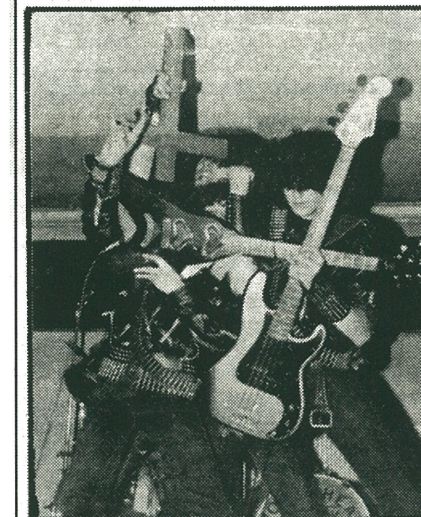
Ed's note: Since this interview was conducted (May '99), Kim has been replaced by original guitarist Gareth Morrow. The current line -up is Jason Barriskill (bass/ vocals/ fx), Gareth Morrow (guitars/ piano/ fx) and Johny Cardwell (drums/ percussion).

DESTRUCTION

DESTRUCTION are, as you would probably guess from the name, yet another Black - Hardcore - Highspeed Metal band. Hailing from Germany, the trio were formed in 1983 under the name of **KNIGHT OF DEMON** but soon changed to their present moniker.

DESTRUCTION, are without a doubt one of the meanest and fastest German metal bands I've heard to date, with obvious comparisons, as usual, to **METALLICA, SLAYER, ANTHRAX** etc.

Their "Bestial Invasion" demo contains six cuts - "Mad Butcher", "Total Disaster", "Anti-Christ", "Front Beast", "Satan's Vengeance" and "Tormentor" - with every track being a brainstorming killer, delivered in a fast, hard-hitting manner.



Unfortunately, as with a lot of Black metal bands, DESTRUCTION are very weak in the vocal department and I hope they get a new singer, quick! But no doubt the band will drive hardcore bangers made with delight and look out for their up-and-coming debut mini-album. The "Bestial Invasion" demo is available for £3.00 from DESTRUCTION, C/O Tommy Sandmann, Egerstr 2, 7858 Weil Am Rhein, GERMANY.

KEN ANTHONY

FROM THE VAULTS

The regular column where we pillage from the Fitted Kitchens vaults. Check this 'un out (above), from Metal Forces zine, um, quite a few years ago... Black Metal was quite a different beastie then...

WAYLANDER

WAYLANDER

"Born to fight"
Cairon O'Hagan - vocals
Jason Barriskill - bass
Dermot O'Hagan - guitar
Dennis Ferran - drums

JASON BARRISKILL, 35 WHITESIDESHILL, BALLYWORKAN, CO. ARMAGH, BT62 3RJ, NORTHERN IRELAND



Jason (top) from his Waylander daze

TAKING TEA WITH JASON NEWSTED

The biggest Metal band in the world. In the eighteen years since the embryonic Metallica was formed by teenage 'erberts Lars Ulrich and James Hetfield, Metallica's remorseless climb to the very top has amazed those who pour scorn on all things Metal. You all know the rest of the story. Whatever your opinion of the band, its undeniable that they've helped to break down so many barriers for Metal.

Getting an interview with these guys isn't like the usual story of wandering down to the venue in the afternoon and bluffing your way in. The organisation surrounding this band is so huge that the only way through is serious perseverance. After days of calls to various record company Press and Promo folks, and finding our way through the vast machines that are Mercury and Q-Prime, Fitted Kitchens caught up with the affable Jason Newsted before their Dublin show for a natter about developments in the Metallicamp, the recent show with the San Fran Symphony Orchestra and all manner of extra-curricular Metal tomfoolery. Read on, kiddies, for news n'views and details of the two Metallica new albums in the pipeline.

'bout ye, Jason! First off, can we embarrass you?

"You can do what you want, I don't know if you can embarrass me though!"

Recognise this? (I hand him a copy of an old Metal Forces zine, with a review of Flotsam and Jetsam's first ever demo. Mr Newsted is sporting an excellent very metal hairdo, and his contact details are at the foot

of the piece).

Jason laughs at this blast from his past, "I remember this like it was yesterday... I remember this cover, I remember it all like it was yesterday. I've a couple of these in plastic in my Flotsam box, this was from our first



photo by joesolo

demo. Fucking beautiful, huh? I remember this so fucking plain, cos this was one of the first reviews we ever had. I mean, this was the big time for us and I remember copying this a whole bunch of times to send to people, and going 'Hey, we got a review, man, we got a review!'. The man's got an insane grin on his face as he recalls that first tentative step.

FISH WITH FEATHERS?

OK, big man, let's move to the serious stuff. You've just recently done two nights



with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and the famed conductor Michael Kamen. Playing Metallica songs. Surely this was a bit of a risk, bringing these two opposites together. Did it go well?

"Great. A lot of them were taken aback by the sheer volume of the whole thing. They'd never witnessed anything quite like it."

It does sound a tad preposterous, Metallica and a full symphony orchestra. I know that various other bands have tried this in the past, such as Deep Purple, but this strikes me as an entirely different kettle of fish.

"Well, people were trying to speculate about what may happen. It was often talked about as 'two worlds colliding' but when it came together it was more like 'two worlds gelling' everything came to life, the true colours came out. It was pretty fucking amazing; we did maybe 6 hours rehearsal for about 4 hours performance (over the two nights-Ed).

Insane... 99 people together, 94 of them, 4 of us, and 1 conductor... 99 people on stage and everything had to come together. They'd never heard fucking 'Fight Fire with Fire', they'd no idea, their world was all Vivaldi and Stravinsky, things they were raised on from when they were about

five years old. All these people are top-notch players, so when it came together it was grandiose, magnificent, like something from another world. Really crazy. And the songs, whether you've heard them three thousand times or played them five thousand times, every song was a new song that day because we hear '1-2-3-4 rock n'roll beat, and these guys are '5-7', shit everywhere, all these accenting instruments, they weren't all main melody instruments, so it was very strange. You could go up into the orchestra themselves and move around while they're playing and you're trying to keep your mind on like 'Wherever I May Roam', pounding that bass line out, and all this shit's all over the place and you're trying to figure out where you are. The concentration factor in all that was a great challenge. And we were all nervous as hell. There was so much anticipation leading up to it, so I mean, we really were walking on glass. By the second night, all the players including us were more comfortable and they made more room for us to get up into the orchestra and we were sweating on the violins, and they're diggin' it. The really cool thing that happened was that 85%-95% of the crowd were Metallica people and some were season tickets of the symphony, but just a few of them! Of the Metallica people, a lot of the girls got dressed up real nice for the show, like it was a special thing, special leathers!" he laughs

"It was cool to see that, we were really happy about the behaviour of the

Metallica freaks because they can sometimes get well outta hand and fucking smash stuff up and everything... and we end up paying for it, it happens a lot! When the orchestra came on ten minutes before the gig and they all found their seats, and the lights went down, the crowd went 'wooaarrggghhh' and you saw the symphony guys freaking out. They're used to a polite smattering applause so they were just smiling from ear to ear and going red and looking over at us, laughing, freaking out, and by the end of the first night the guys in the middle violin section were holding their bows and giving devil signs to the kids! The second night, they were wearing Metallica shirts under their tuxedos and we were all swapping autographs and some of the cats were really into Metallica, like the first cello guy, and had their Metallica records already, so it was a really cool experience."

"We did 'Call of Kthulu' during the show, which I've never played with the band, so there was just a little pressure" he deadpans. "But it came off, it was moving, I get goosebumps just talking about it now. It's quite incredible. We did 'The Outlaw torn' also which we haven't done before live, and personally that's one of the best Metallica songs there has ever been, and it came off real well too"

I believe that the recordings of this show have been tentatively scheduled for release later this year

"Yes, we're planning on releasing a CD and DVD in November this year, if everything goes right with edits and so on; we still have to look at everything and pick the best from both nights. There'll also be two brand new songs on there, written just for that gig. One is just way fucking cool, really heavy, man, really slow (makes a huge chugging riff sound), cool tuned down Metal. So there you go, that's all coming, that'll be the next thing you see from Metallica, and we'll



Jason, standing second from right, w/ Flotsam and Jetsam

be working on a new record next year. Hey, that's just the first question!"

Yeah, and I'm looking at a list of fourteen more!! With your profile as a global Metal band, almost as THE Metal band, you could say that zine interviews have become unessential for Metallica. Yet here I am, chatting to you now. You're the guy who deals with the 'non-glossy' press side of things, why the conscious decision to keep in touch with the zine scene?

"Everybody kinda has their role in this band and one of mine, something which I live for, is to keep in touch with the people who aren't afraid to tell me what they really think; it's not all 'hey, great' and all that shit, people will really tell you 'you guys really sucked last night!' or whatever. I also welcome all these things, comments good or bad. I kinda like to keep up on this sorta thing, also I'm the one that I guess probably listens to the heavier stuff than the rest of the guys these days. Kirk still listens to some heavy stuff, but for the most part I think I still have 'the metal edge'."

TO THE DEVIL HIS DUES

The recent Garage Inc album gives a good idea of where Metallica have cum from, in terms of inspiration and influence. In fact, Sweet Savage were interviewed in issue one of this very zine. What about your own personal Metal favourites, anything overlooked in your opinion on 'Garage' or are you happy that the disc has done justice to Metallica's musical genesis?

"I think that was a good representation. Even though the four of us grew up in different corners of the planet, we're all the same age, we all had an interest in the same music and the same bands and the same performers as we came up. Black Sabbath being number one, above everybody else. Black Sabbath was always top for all of us. I listened to a lot of Motorhead, Diamond Head, even though I was by myself in Michigan at the time before I really got 'hip' to what would be known later as the NWOBHM. In the place that I was, a farming community, the import bin in record store was about 1 inch deep and I'd always be right in there, getting whatever there was, Angelwitch, Motorhead, Diamond Head. Whatever there was, I'd take it, even Girlschool! I didn't really pay a lot of attention to the American stuff, other than Van Halen, that first album turned my head around. We all came up on the same mu-

sic, it was easy to choose the bands to pay homage to. Picking the songs wasn't as easy! We'd list about 40 songs, maybe about 5 from Sabbath, 5 from the Cult... the Blue Oyster Cult that is!"

phew, we were just about to leave Jason laughs and re-emphasises "The BLUE-OYSTER-CULT. And, y'know, 10 from the Misfits and we had to decide which would be the coolest ones to cover. Of all the



songs, I think there are two which maybe don't belong, Bob Seiger and Nick Cave. The reason that Nick Cave was included was because around 5 or 6 years ago when James began to try to sing a bit more instead of shouting all the time, he didn't go for the cool, smooth singers, but for the evil, darker guys. Tom Waits, Nick Cave, Johnny Cash, those kind of cats. I think it was important for him to give a shout to someone who had influenced him. The Bob Seger thing was something that we'd talked about doing at least 10 years ago, when we were still travelling around on buses. We could relate to every single word he had to say... it wasn't about the music really, it's about the lyrical content. We said 'Ok, some day we're going to do that' and as the years went by, into the nineties, we were 'should we put it on the b-side of this single, that single', but it never happened, so on Garage we finally included it... and it ends up being the biggest radio song that we've ever had in our career! Fucking whacky, I don't want to be known for that!" He rolls his eyes in mock disgust before continuing "But its ok, I'm not going to scoff at it, it's a cool song, I listened to that song 25 years ago when it first came out. I'm from Michigan, Bob's from Michigan, man, my older brothers had that the first day it came out, so that song is actually closer to me probably than for any of the other guys, they don't know that really, but I listened to that so many thousand times on Michigan Radio, man!"

'NEWKID' NO MORE

You've been in Metallica for well over a decade now...

"13 years. Lucky 13!"

How many different 'Metallicas' have you seen in that time? I'm not talking about superficial stuff like number of albums or anything like that, but in terms of the band's development, I mean the jump from 1990-91

was enormous. That's one example. I'd say that there have probably been 4 or 5 distinct 'Metallicas' over the last 13 years.

"You're right. And that's to do most with the personal lives of the people that are in the band. Things change, priorities shift and that kinda changes the whole band. One guy does one thing, that changes the whole look or vibe of the band, another guy does that and so on, it kinda moves on, which in itself is a great healthy thing"

Yet you still have to deal with the constant pressures put on you by fans that simply can't understand why, or don't want to accept that, Metallica will change.

"Because you're not flesh and bone to these people, you're a glossy picture. You're a video. You're 'larger than life', you're not really a person. 'This is my Metallica, this is how they should look, should be, I can turn them on, turn them off, click click click.' Whatever. There's a lot more to the people that make up Metallica than that. And so, as time goes on, your image changes a little bit, your music takes different turns. But no matter how 'weird' the sound starts getting or how 'twisty' and 'turny' songs become I don't think that Metallica has ever gone away from the core. That 'kun-chung' guitar sound has always been there, no matter what, and the 'uu-yah!' of James' voice is always in there, even when he sings something like 'Mama Said'. It still has an attitude, still has that determination,



and still has that whole integrity, man. I'd say to people, if you don't like the band anymore, don't like the music we play, it doesn't really fucking bother me... I'm glad you have enough of a brain to make your own decision and know what you want, I'd rather have you do that than follow us like a sheep. But don't disre-

spect us. We broke down so many doors and so much shit happened and we've taken the music so many fucking places. That's something that the kids don't see. They're twenty years old, they've put bands together, just learning how to put songs together, and they look down on things that are melodic or that are played on the radio. Guys, if these dudes that that are being played on the radio right now hadn't done what they did when you were nine years old, your ass wouldn't be playing distorted metal now, you wouldn't even be in a band. Think about that."

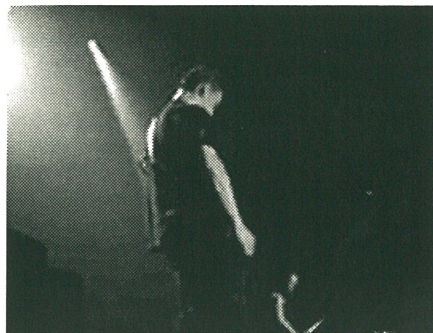
The man's on a roll here...

"No matter how much they may want to deny it, most guitar players in this time that play heavy music are somehow influenced by Hetfield and Hammett. That's the only thing that bugs me; if people could just be a little bit bigger within themselves and see that whole picture. I do not care if they don't buy the fucking records, it does not bother me. But just realise the process of things, realise the evolution of things. There's five or six Metallicas within the same four people because of evolution, of growth of our accelerated lifestyles, 200 shows a year, 300 shows a year, so far. And today, I'll meet between 50 and 200 people, and I will tomorrow and the same the next day. I'll read more books, hear more music, be exposed to more culture, all these things, that all goes along with it. So when you see evolution in a band and you see pages turning, that's why. It's because there's a lot to it. All the guys in Metallica are very perceptive, they put a lot of shit into it and are very focussed individuals. We're very different from each other, man; we're not always going to like each others friends or girlfriends or wives or any of that shit, just like in any job in the world anywhere, but the fact is that we do see the big picture together and so we keep doing what we do no matter who says its shit or good. It doesn't matter. That shit bounces off, we will continue to do what we want to do no matter what."

HELL AWAITS?

Metallica have by and large escaped the Metal media's fickleness, and the backlashes which have fatally damaged so many other acts. You can't deny that you've been extremely fortunate here, but how have Metallica avoided the shit?

"Because we've worked so hard at it. If you work that hard at it and you're fucking determined then people are going to respect you, no matter whether they like your music or not, like your haircut or not." he laughs, pausing to stroke his head. "Integrity's been built by taking the music out there to wherever westernised rock n'roll music will be accepted. There's only one band that's played heavy music in more places than us and more times and that's AC/DC... they're Gods to me. They're like such a fine tuned efficient tank, rolling over anything in their path, fucking insane. We've played shows with them and there's only AC/DC and perhaps one other band in the whole world who could follow Metallica in my opinion on the live stage for heavy music... Slayer. I fucking love Slayer, they crush, the best heavy live show I've ever seen and I will continue to go to their con-



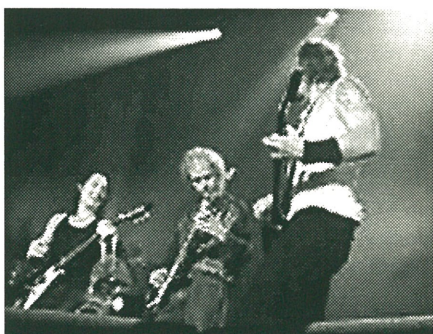
Jason at Dublin's Point Depot

certs every time they come to my town. Even though we've been friends forever, I still look at them like 'woah!' this is fucking wicked! It's like turning on the faucet all the way on, steaming hot for a fucking hour! No in-between, just (he mimics an Araya-esque howl) all the whole fucking time. To me, that relentless barrage is fucking beautiful. So Slayer could probably follow Metallica on a good day. AC/DC could follow Metallica. When you go play a show with AC/DC you recognise every song. Not everyone can do that!"

SINK OR SWIM

When you first joined Metallica, I believe you were given something of a hard time, and that it was a tough apprenticeship for the first few years at least

"That's very true. It was testing, man, testing. You've got to think about the man whose shoes I try to fill, and continue to try to fill, and its impossible because of who he was. I mean, there's certain people, man, there's certain people in the world, artists, musicians, who are gifted, they have this fucking thing. Hetfield's one of them, none of the rest of us are I don't feel. Cliff was one of them and to have him and James in the same band, there's just no way that that chemistry could be more powerful, it was just fucking unbelievable. As soon as I heard about Cliff's death, I thought Metallica should quit. You know, go 'this the blueprint for Heavy Metal FOREVER, here take these and run with them' to the next generation of bands coming up. I obviously didn't know the band yet as people, and since I've met them I know there's no way that they're going to fucking stop! But Cliff was such a big part of their lives, as musicians first and then as a friend. He didn't talk a lot but when he did it was like an event, everyone paid attention, even Lars, cos Lars has the most selective hearing of anyone I've known. He picks and chooses when he decides to listen to shit, I'm not sure whether he does this out of arrogance or because his



Lizzy's Eric Bell on stage for 'Whiskey in the Jar

head's just going so fast all the time that he's not hearing. Cliff taught James how to play guitar harmonies and helped him with theory and helped him to become this really killer guitar player over a couple of years, really kicked him in the butt, cos Cliff was a good guitar player too. So that can't be replaced. I know that's something I would never try to do, cos he had the gift and its something that can't be replaced. But these guys had to know if I was going to be able to hang, that's all, and it took two or three years for them to make that decision whether I was going to be able to hang. After six months of being in the band I signed a contract to be 25% of Metallica. But it was still two or three years following that that was just hazing constantly, all sorts of crazy shit. Still to this day, I think the most difficult thing in any band in any situation where you have to hang with people for 200 days a year and be in really close quarters is the emotional stress. That human factor. That's the on thing that is universal- emotions. Everybody has the same ones and so that's the toughest thing to deal with no matter what. It really fucked me up for a while; because I'd looked up to Cliff so much before the accident, I didn't stop thinking about that for about three years, every day. Eventually, it started to subside, I started to come into my own, the guys started to give me some space and show me respect and that kinda thing, really accepting me for a bass player and all that shit. It took a long time, and it was all up to me. That was it basically, the bottom line, its up to me, if I could take it, if I could continue day after day and keep just taking the big steps then I was going to be the man for the job and could last 13 years, 15 years, 20 years, whatever its going to be".

FAR BEYOND DRIVEN

Beyond Metallica, you've got an increasing reputation for your extra-curricular activities in all manner of Metal tomfoolery. Going beyond your various album appearances and collaborations (on Sepultura's last offering or writing and singing 'Fatsos World' on Jim Martin's 'Milk and Blood' debut), tell us about your various side-projects of late.

"About ten months ago I did the Sepultura thing. We did that together in my studio in California. Uh, side project stuff... Andreas and I did one with this drummer who plays for a flamenco guitarist called Otmar Lebert, I don't know if you know him, he like sells millions of records of 'New Age' music. This drummer guy is into all these Brazilian rhythms and he came from a punk band but now plays all this crazy, incredible stuff. Andreas and I got together with this guy and that became pretty sick, that was one of the cool ones that have been happening. In March of this year, I did a project with Devin Townsend and Gene Hoglan and that was a little scary! Let's see, what else has been happening... did a project with DJ Shadow not that long ago for the UNCLE record, its like a trip-hop project, his second album. He's from California, he called me out to play a track on; I've never played with a 'turntable-ist' before and it was fucking great! I just gained such respect for those guys that day, it takes as much talent as being a good lead guitar player. It really is something amazing, dude, it really is. Its incredible, man, incredible. This guy had 300 records with him for that day and only two of them I'd ever heard of. Like, 'The Satanic verse' by Anton La Vey and Billy Squires. All kinds of records from Spanish garage bands, pull a bit of this, a little off that, and eventually he's got this sick symphony of samples playing. I was like, 'Jesus, this a new world, this is the future of music, its really something else'. I always try and keep the projects happening, I have literally hundreds and hundreds of tapes of all these projects with guys from Voivod, guys from the Melvins, guys from Kyuss and Machine Head, you know, tons of shit."

Does this ever get beyond the studio? I've heard reports that the rest of Metallica would be less than chuffed if it began circulating.

"A couple of the projects are available on the Internet. The IR8 project, which is the original project with Devin and Tom Hunting from Exodus, it really broke down the doors for me to do these kind of projects. We followed that with the Quartetta da Binga which was Rob Flynn, Andreas, myself and Tom Hunting. Pure evil! Andreas and Rob together in a tiny room battling it out with full stacks, really fucked up. Both of those are available on the internet- but not through my doing".

He continues "I would love to share this stuff with people, but I don't ever want to weaken that fist of Metallica. Everybody's become a lot cooler with it than they were in '94 with the IR8 project. But I also think at the same time that when people go off on solo projects, even if the band is allegedly intact, that the listeners and

FLOTSAM & JETSAM



FLOTSAM AND JETSAM hail from Arizona and despite their strange moniker, can be thoroughly recommended as a name for the future.

Their "Metal Shock" demo contains four tracks ranging from the out and out speed metal of the ANTHRAX inspired "Hammerhead" to the more complexed technical rhythms of "I Live, You Die".

"The Evil Sheikh" is a little on the long side where the band are maybe trying to be a little too clever while "The Bear Within" is a more straight forward medium paced affair with a neckbreaking chorus.

In Erik A. Knutson the band have a strong vocalist and along with a somewhat original sound I can see a bright future for FLOTSAM AND JETSAM although I still have doubts about that name. The band whose line-up reads: Eric A. Knutson (vocals), Edward Carlson, Michael Gilbert (both guitars), Jason Newsted (bass) and Kelly Smith (drums) can be contacted at: FLOTSAM AND JETSAM, c/o Jason Newsted, 2102 West Mariposa 5, Phoenix, AZ 85015, USA. BERNARD DOE

fans of the music look at the band differently and look at the solo person differently, as if some kind of weakness has entered and taken away from the band. There can only be a few exceptions to that, such as singer/guitar players of bands who are really outstanding and **have** to do a solo project, Chris Cornell or someone like that, that would be accepted. But for any of us to do that, because Metallica is seen as such a unit, such a team, for one of us to do a solo project would take away from the power of Metallica."

From the frantic watch-pointing gestures of the tour manager, I think he's trying to get us to wrap this baby up. Jason, many thanks for the interview, its certainly been an event! Just before we have to split, tell me what you make of peoples' often anal attitudes to Metal.

"I don't mind people being dedicated to their kind of music, like 'I love Death Metal, man!', that's cool and it has its place. But you can interbreed and cross all different kinds of music. Ok, a lot of its crap, some shit simply doesn't mix. But there's one band from Puerto Rico right now, Puya, and if you get a chance, check these fucking guys out- they are the future of music. Like three bands within one band, they will change five times during one song, from Salsa to distorted tribal with perfect sound, Latin percussion, then full Metal, all over the fucking shop, singing in English, singing in Spanish. Super cool, man. There are a few bands like that, but they are really outstanding. That kinda thing is what needs to happen, to prise people's heads open. Don't get me wrong, being true to Metal is a very righteous thing, but you should also be open-minded to other things because you can learn from it!"

Metallica are Jason Newsted (bass), James Hetfield (vocals/ guitar), Kirk Hammett (guitar) and Lars Ulrich (drums). Many thanks to Sharon Dunn (Universal), Lesley Fraser (Mercury) and Dan (Metallica crew) for their help with arranging this interview.

ALBUM/EP REVIEWS

In a move away from the previous issue, the 0-3 point scoring system has been abandoned, purely because it was shite. Instead, we've just gone for an honest description this time around of the good, the bad and the downright ugly albums that Fitted Kitchens has dragged back to its lair over the past nine months.

Black massive appreciation goes out to all the guys and gals for the promos.

Ok, baby, let's enter into the realm of Satan....

All reviews by Spandex



Abaddon Incarnate 'The Last Supper' (Seasons of Mist)

Slamming this advance tape into the deth deck and pressing play is akin to being dragged into the very bowels of Hell itself. This is filthy, nasty Death Metal, brutal and unsettling and packed with aggression, speed and some of the most intense and crazed lead breaks these ears have heard. Overall, think of the aggression of, say, Immolation, the power of Morbid Angel and the malevolent approach of Deicide. From what I've heard from the band themselves, the lyrical content is equally vile and extreme (and, to be honest, in some instances sounds downright idiotic), but then again, lyrics are generally a secondary concern in the sonic headfuk game. Overall, extremely impressive. The release date for 'The Last Supper' has been scheduled for this Autumn, so start saving those shekels now.

Acid Death 'Pieces of Mankind' (Copro)

Like the debut from Dawn of Relic (see below), this re-released debut from this Greek quartet is a frustrating affair. And entirely for all the same reasons. What we have here over the eleven songs is a prime example of excellent musicianship being fucked up the arse by piss-poor vocals. Vocals are the glue of a band; they can carry poor musicianship, but never vice-versa. Well ok, generally never. Acid Death, as their name would suggest, have one size 11 firmly in Thrash-land and display occasionally stunning virtuosity with a strong progressive element which wouldn't go amiss on, say, a Dream Theater album. In addition, Voivod influences pop their head above the vocal mire on several instances, most notably several minutes into 'Reappearing Freedom', a very strong song, and this in itself is guaranteed to get the Fitted Kitchen staff dribbling at the hog's eye. But those vocals... ok, they're of a competent enough Death/ HC style, but are insufferably dull over the course of a sin-

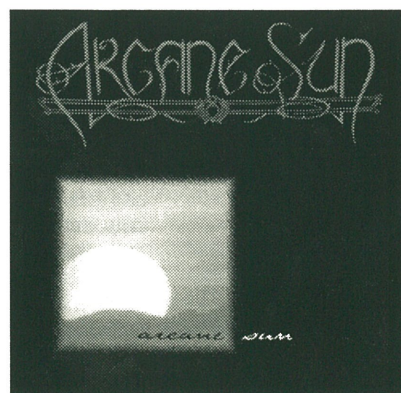
gle song never mind an entire album. Closer 'The Mirror on the Top of the World' is great purely because someone else sings.

Amsvartner 'Dreams' (Blackend)

This debut album has all the musical dexterity and surprises of fellow-Swedes Arch Enemy, but with a more brutal and death-like delivery. These angry young dudes clearly have their genesis in extreme Death/ Black metal, but are steaming ahead with their very own agenda. Travelling far beyond the confines of 'hard rock', they manage to fuse funk and jazz ideas and tempos into several of their songs, making for a surprisingly credible and fascinating result. For instance, 'Funkyman' (an admittedly cringe-inducing title) sounds like an unholy trinity of Les Claypool, LG Petrov and, say, Swordmaster. And no, it doesn't transcend to the level of Mordred-like tedium. Recommended for the more discerning Metaller.

Ancient Ceremony 'Fallen Angel's Symphony' (Cacophonous)

I've given this several spins at different times of the day and in different frames of mind to see if I can fathom what Ancient Ceremony are trying to do... and it appears that they are simply trying to play the most boring Black Metal on the planet. In this respect, they do well. All the requisites are there... some bird's sultry vocals, keyboard overdose, and some bloke going 'hey, look, I can sing in seven different voices'. For the sake of all that is (un)holy guys, at least pretend that you have something original to offer. Admittedly, there are two songs towards the very end of this effort which show some promise (one of them, 'Symphoni Satani', being very good in fact, with its restrained synth-and-vocal-only approach)... this is where Ancient Ceremony lift their foot off the throttle on their way to Nowheresville and take time to get out, look around them and have a stretch and a smoke, before climbing back into their comedy clown car and zooming via 'Vampyresque Wedding Night' towards the great Metal Abyss. Redeeming factors? The only one I can think of is that I didn't have to pay for this crap.



Arcane Sun 'Arcane Sun' (Ars Metallii)

This, Arcane Sun's debut album, is easily one of the best albums I've heard all year (readers with an elephantine memory will recall that I had ranted and raved over an advance tape in issue one of this rag). Touching on a variety of styles of music, from death to doom via many a little-trodden back road, they've come up with

an album of such depth, maturity and charisma that it has at a single stroke upped the ante of the entire Irish Metal scene. The listener may recognise certain clear influences such as earlier Anathema etcetera, but Arcane Sun haven't just aped their idols; instead, they have used them as a tiny building block for their own unique sound. The best song of the entire album has to be 'Longing for Eden's rain (and Winters End)', where all the best of Arcane falls seamlessly into place. Superb stuff, and there is no reason why they shouldn't outgrow their Irish base and become a major name in Europe and beyond. The only downer is that it can be difficult to get hold of the album itself, as Ars Metallii's promotion and distribution in the UK/ Ireland is truly dismal. Best places to try are Supernal Music (London), Soundcellar (Dublin) or direct from the band themselves.

Arch Enemy 'Burning Bridges' (Century Media)

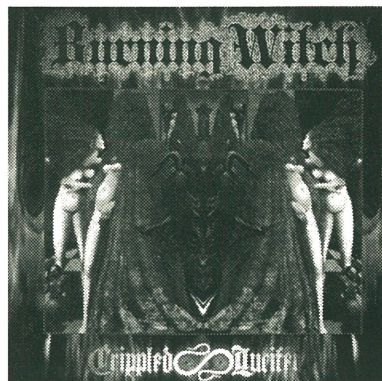
The idea of 'supergroup' Metal should rightly spark of a suspicion that you're in for a major-label shafting... witness the abomination of drivel, for instance, that was Covenant's laughable 'Nexus Polaris' effort last year. But, woahhh! Arch Enemy actually deliver the goods. What's the best way to describe the music? Good question. Opener 'The Immortal' manages to bring a plethora of elements together in a matter of minutes and actually meld them into a cohesive and credible whole. Think, boys and girls, of the aggressive contemporary thrash attack of fellow Swedes The Haunted, the twisted technical precision of classic Megadeth before they went all girly and started singing about jumping out of airplanes instead of nuclear armageddon and violent random death, and a strong progressive Death Metal vibe. Perhaps the best reference point for all this would be At The Gates... however, the jury at Fitted Kitchens towers is still out on this comparison. Yet, there's even more... if daga-daga-daga German Metal is yer bag, then check out 'Seeds of Hate', like a psychopathic Running Wild on PCP. 'Pilgrim' starts off with the type of soaring guitar lead that Entwined carried off so successfully in their '98 debut. The brothers Amott are pretty much geetar gods, more than ably matched by the drumming of Erlendsson, the vocals of Liiva and the bass stuff of the moonlighting D'Angelo. Precision engineered, but as powerful as hell and stamped with authority, good stuff for the evening after a crap day at work.

Bewitched 'Dragonflight' (Conquistador)

No, not the Swedish retro-thrasheurs, that other crowd from Chile. I guess that the Doom genre is where this act has one of its feet planted, but the other is in solid Steel Metal, with a very European sound... a major reference point is Mercyful Fate, albeit it a tad slower (in fact, they cover 'Black Funeral' on this offering). Other influences which come to mind are Sabbath and long-defunct US thrash masters Holy Terror (on occasional riffs). Sterling stuff.

Burning Witch 'Crippled Lucifer' (Southern Lord)

Seven tracks of apocalyptic DOOM which will beat any listener into complete submission. An experience in pure audio attrition. Think SLOW doom... and then halve the speed. This is some of the harshest, heaviest shit that has ever dragged itself through my speakers, and is simply astounding. Excellent stuff.



Burzum 'Hliðskjalf' (Misanthropy)

Thrown together in Trondheim Prison, this is a 'concept album based on the myths surrounding the death of the Norse god Wotan', or so the promo literature claims. There is a lyric sheet with the CD, but no vocals at all on the album itself, which is rather odd. By no stretch of the imagination can this ambient synth-fest be defined as even vaguely Metal, and in fact it wouldn't sound out of place if it were piped over the speakers in a health food shop. The only reason that people will presumably buy this cack is because of all the publicity accorded to Varg's objectionable 'extra-curricular' activities, which is pretty tragic in itself. The words 'utter' and 'toss' spring to mind. Yawn, Laudenum, who needs it when you've got this shit.



Cathedral 'Caravan Beyond Redemption' (Earache)

Cathedral are one of those bands who face a double-edged sword. They've got a sound that is so distinctive that they occupy a niche all to themselves... yet at the same time, it also means that owning one or two albums is probably sufficient to get a fill of the vibe. There's some appallingly lazy shite on offer here... 'Freedom', 'Revolution', 'Satanikus Robotikus' are pointless bollox with their over-reliance on whimsy and forced groove, and no amount of flare-flapping tongue in cheek can excuse such drivel. On the other hand, 'Captain Clegg' is one of the best songs they've ever written... everything falls into place on this one, which is in the same vein as the klassik 'Hopkins (Witchfinder General)'. Not an essential Cathedral album by any means, but which does have a couple of blinding songs and which sees Lee and co mercifully moving beyond their self-imposed confines of late before self-parody consumes them.

Centinex 'Bloodhunt' (Repulse)

Aaarrggghhhh, the New Wave of Swedish Melodic Death Metal (NWSMDM anyone?) rolls ever onward, and the question that should be asked is whether we really need another In Flames/ At The Gates inspired album. Well, I'm inclined to say 'yes' because it's all so spiffing. Centinex have a really sussed sound on this one, and have produced an album that could only have been made in Sweden...hell's teeth, they even got that sik-as-fuk early Entombed geetar vibe, top marks for that alone in my book. There's also a distinct Black Metal vibe in some guitar work, as on 'For Centuries Untold', which wouldn't sound out of place on an Emperor release. But these are just a couple of reference points, as Centinex is much much more than a mere nailing together of commercially assured influences. The six songs rip by in just under 22 minutes, allowing no respite or wandering of attention. Check it out, boys and girls.

Cranium 'Speed Metal Sentence' (Necropolis)

Cranium, a Swedish side-project type of affair, have clearly set themselves off Germaning the Germans in the nasty retro Satanik Sikk Thrash Attak stakes... think over the top thrash, mad snarling and falsetto vocals and a huge dose of humour and charm. The vocals are killer. Opener 'Speed Metal Sentence' sets the good-times vibe of the album off to a tee, with its ridiculous court-room scenario with Metallers receiving various sentences and subsequently tearing the court to bits... think of Exodus' 'Objection Overruled' or the start to Megadeth's 'Captive Honour' to get the vague idea, and then apply the Idiotomizer machine. Jeez, wish they'd included a lyric sheet with this, though 'Nymphomaniac Nuns' should be self explanatory. Like Necropolis' 'Thrashing Holocaust' compilation, this will serve its purpose best as the soundtrack to pre-gig drinking parties. Good friendly violent fun.

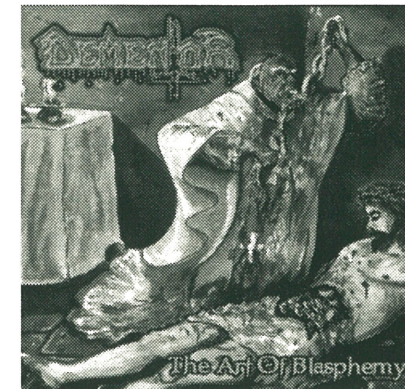
Dark Tranquility 'Projector' (Century Media)

No one can accuse Sweden's Dark Tranquility of playing it safe or being mere clones of another act, and in this respect their excellent reputation is well grounded. And a song like 'UnDo Control' is a very tasty morsel of Metal. Overall however, 'Projector' is too 'twee' and 'nice' for my liking, particularly the vocals, and this album will in all probability gather dust for the next few months before I swap it for summat more exciting. Any takers?

Dawn of Relic 'One Night in Carcosa' (Wicked World)

On first listen, this seems like yet another ten-a-penny Black Metal act. Well, in many ways, it is just that. This Finnish crew relies heavily on done-to-death Dimmu Borgir parpisms, and has laughable vocals all the way through. Dull, dull, dull. However, there are positive things to say. Take 'Kadath Opened', for example; it starts off just like you'd expect any 'new' Black Metal band to start off, but then suddenly we're into seriously good charismatic metal (think of the mature minimalism of Rush, not the overblown bombast that masquerades as 'atmospheric' these days), before it blunders back into bumbling Black-isms. Likewise, 'Welkins Gat'

showcases some surprisingly mature structures. Even better, it's an instrumental. It's a frustrating album... Dawn of Relic will make an excellent progressive follow up if they drop their worst trend affectations. And that fucking singer.



Dementor 'The Art of Blasphemy' (Qabalah/ Repulse)

The short instrumental opener nods towards Slayer's 'Raining Blood', and there's a brutal Deathly Deicide-cum-Morbid Angel vibe throughout the album. The production ain't bad at all on this, their second album release, and this is a great listen for those increasingly frequent fucked off moods that I seem to be having of late. Dementor also deserve attention because of their cover art which depicts Pope John Paul devouring the entrails of an eviscerated Christ. Mmm, tasteful.

Desaster 'Hellfire Dominion' (Merciless)

Hmm, 'retro'... the trend that never really was. Sabbath (Japan) et al have the ability and charisma to carry it off. Bewitched (Sweden) sort of have it. Inferno deluded themselves and scores of stupid punters that they had it. Sacred Steel have the lyrics and the logo and the puffed out torsos, but forgot to write anything resembling a decent song. But what of Desaster? Well, they have it in spades. Retro-isms abound, but they've enough savvy to make it relevant, no matter how paradoxical this may sound. Take 'Expect No Release', for example... any song that so brazenly rips off Slayer's 'Evil has no Boundaries' that it hurts, and then has the added audacity to throw in the bridge from 'Raining Blood' and get away with it, must be doing something right. And check out 'Metalized Blood' for some of the most outrageous German vocals ever recorded... METTAAALLLLL!

Desecration 'Murder in Mind' (Copro)

If you like yer Death Metal brutal, honest and mind-crushingly uncompromising, then these Welsh bastards are the band for you. This time around, they've avoided printing any lyrics (the hoo-ha over their last album having convinced that its more trouble than its worth... pity, cos I'm sure the ones to 'Obscene Publication' are well vitriolic) on the sleeve, but from titles like 'Stillborn Climax' and 'Crave for Rot' and all manner of sick and vile samples, you don't have to be a genius to figure out that its pretty delightful stuff. Check these guys out when they play Ireland later this year.

Ebony Lake 'On the Eve of the Grimly Inventive'

(Cacophonous)

Easy listening this is not. Think of an experimental Metal version of fellow Brits the Cardiacs, yet more disjointed and haphazard. There is no way on this toilet earth that you would be able to listen to this album in its entirety in one single sitting without diving across the room and ripping it out of your player in extreme frustration and annoyance. Paradoxically, nonetheless, that is exactly what makes Ebony Lake such a compelling listen. Its not just noise for its own sake, and nor is it egotistical art-wank (though it strays perilously close to such on occasion). No, it's an intelligent set of arrangements with a strong English Romantic-poetic feel. Um, really... I don't know how else to describe it. I could try and get the picture across by calling it 'a John Zorn version of Therion' but that's equally useless. Whatever. Give it a spin. And, like the medicine bottle says, 'Do Not Exceed Prescribed Dose' (roughly one song per sitting).

Enthroned 'The Apocalypse Manifesto'

(Blackend)

Relentless blasting Black Metal in the main, but which does manage to temper the frontal assault by utilising well sussed instrumental passages in the songs. Songs to scare yer neighbours with.

Evenfall 'Still in the Grey Dying'

(Century Media)

Let's be blunt from the outset, these Austrians are an irrelevance in contemporary extreme Metal. There's nothing new or unique in what they play- 'Gothic' Black Metal through and through, replete with Hammer House of Horrors keys and shrill vs growling vocals. It's like Evenfall were bricked up back in '95, but have only now managed to kick the crypt door of its hinges and staggered gasping and heaving into the moonlight to inflict their fetid wares. If Century Media were a fast food chain, then Evenfall would be their Double McDani with Extra Cheese. Saying that, its actually quite fun, and if you couldn't be bothered to constantly seek new aural experiences, then this may well be your bag, maan.

Ewigkeit 'Starscape'

(Eldethorn)

James Fogarty's Ewigkeit delivered a very good debut last year, and this second album is unmistakably from the same head. The basis laid down on the debut has been built upon on and expanded to create a couple of good songs (particularly 'The Legend of Keshara'), but the problem is that the bulk of material sounds very similar to the bulk of the material from last time ('Point of Origin', 'Unveiling the Mystery', etc). In this sense, 'Starscape' doesn't really offer anything new, although there has been a noticeable progression in production. Still, interesting listening, worth checking out. It'll be interesting to see where James goes next.

Godflesh 'Us and Them'

(Earache)

What can you say about a new Godflesh album except that it's a new Godflesh album? This duo's work is just so damn characteristic that it's impossible to describe them as anything but themselves. I've never been an avid follower of this act, only owning their debut and 'Pure', but this is much more of a listenable

affair than what I've heard to date. No, that doesn't necessarily mean that they've turned girly and/or sucked the Great Corporate Cock, but that their music is now much more mesmerising and fascinating... whereas earlier stuff tended to grate and seemed to fall on its arse en route from the speakers to my ears, this is compelling. Check out opener 'I, Me, Mine' with its drum'n'bass sensibilities, or 'End-games' with its groove-ridden structure. However, the definite highlight has to be 'The Internal' with its brooding yet soaring guitar and rich haunting vocals, almost emo-esque, a beautiful and essential piece of music that'll make your neck hairs tingle and fill the heart of even the most ardent misanthropic metallor with joy. Godflesh being beautiful? Indeed so.

Grip Inc 'Solidify'

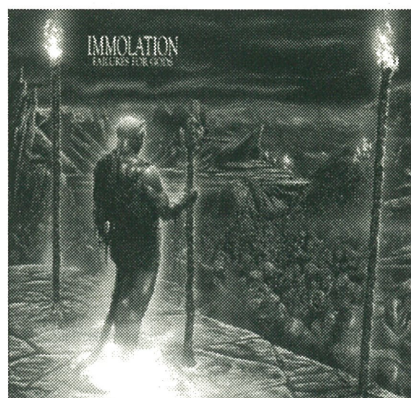
(SPV)

Given that the line up includes the legendary Dave Lombardo and Waldemar Sorychta, 'Solidify' is as technically great and proficient as you would expect. In terms of sound, think of razor guitars, mesmeric bass, good full drum sound and impressive vocals. However, it fails to excite me. It does not have balls. It does not rock. It doth suck very badly indeed. Not an essential album at all. If yer a fan of the skins man, check out the new Testament platter instead.

Hexecution 'Beyond All Evil'

(Copro)

A three track EP from these English melodic mid-paced Death Metal 'erberts. The first couple of minutes of opener 'Infinite Insanities' rips off Metallica's 'Wherever I May Roam' delivery and riffs something rotten. Things begin improve by song three, 'Torrent of Impurity', but this really isn't the strongest Death Metal platter I've heard in the past year and nowhere as good as label mates Desecration.



Immolation 'Failures For Gods'

(Metal Blade)

Wooaaaahhhh... BRRUUTTTAAALLL stuff. This, Immolation's third album, is one of the heaviest platters to have been played on my trusty deth deck over the past couple of months, a searing blistering juggernaut of brutal blasphemous Metal. One of the clearest reference points for the Immolation vibe would be to say that it sounds like a heavy as fuck Deicide. With songs titles like 'No Jesus, No Beast', it could seem that Immolation are merely out to shock through mindless sterile platitudes, but this New York four piece have put their money where their mouth is in recent interviews, giving voice to a far more articulate lyrical agenda than may at first seem the case. If the latest

Morbid Angel and Nile goodies got your Percy dribbling the demon seed, then feast your beast on this 'un.

Konkhra 'The Freakshow EP'

(Diehard)

What initially grabbed my attention on this EP when I landed through my front door was the fact that Konkhra had set themselves the ambitious task of doing justice to two classics of 80's British Metal. Well, their interpretation of Maiden's 'Prowler' is tolerable, but Motorhead's 'Orgasmatron' is rendered dull and lifeless, a heinous crime. Being such a 'Head addict, by rights I should have really stopped listening at this point and taken the CD next door to cram up the arse of my techno-fixated neighbour. But let's give the remaining three original tracks a spin. Well, 'Sight for Sore Eyes' is the best on offer... take a few pinches of contemporary Entombed, a dash of grease, and enjoy. But the remaining two are pretty dull. With the accompanying promo literature stating proudly that the band have opted for a rockier approach than previously, and 'leaving out the usual Metal frills', you wonder why they chose to do so. Some good ideas, but not enough to hold my attention or inspire me to write anything vaguely resembling an interesting review.

Lacuna Coil 'In a Reverie'

(Century Media)

Reviews of Lacuna Coil's debut album have all tended to focus on the debatable charms of frontwoman Christina. I suppose its inevitable now that this young Italian lady will be wank fodder for an entire generation of bum-fluff Metallors, topping the 'most shagable' lists in end of year reviews in the glossy Metal press. In many ways, such a focus is an extremely ambiguous blessing for the band. Sure, its gets them attention in the every-craving-novelty press, but there is more to LC than a bit of cheap trouser excitement. They really need to focus on presenting themselves as an entire package, not just a frontwoman and three hairy blokes. This task is compounded by the fact that the bulk of this album is of dubious quality. It would be churlish to say that 'In a Reverie' is complete crap... it ain't, and there are a couple of gems contained within. Opener 'Circle' is great, full of punch and vigour, which showcases Christina's phenomenal lung capabilities to the full. 'Veins of Glass' is equally of note. These two songs show Lacuna Coil's strengths and potential... the remainder, unfortunately, all too clearly display their flaws. There's simply too much gloss, and they've coated the songs with sugar until they've become sickly sweet. I guess all the hype will see this album becoming the soundtrack to a thousand failed Saturday night shags.

Marshall Law 'Warning from History'

(Neat)

It's too easy a target; in an international Metal arena, Marshall Law reek of smalltown parochialism. Let's see... a spoken word intro from Tommy Vance on 'Harbinger', guest guitaring from Magnum's Tony Clarkin, backing vocals from Steve Grimmett (Grim Reaper, Lionsheart, Onslaught), and a 'thanks' to Al Atkins, who's sole claim to fame is that he was thrown out of Judas Priest aeons ago to make way for then new-boy Rob Halford. Combined with truly dismal cover art, it all screams 'second division', the type of Metal listened to by balding, ageing

Rockers from the Midlands who ride motorbikes at weekends to get away from their fat ugly wives and screaming kids. As English as net curtains, taking the dog down the pub, egg and chips, and crap weather. In the main, this is solid if uninspired British Metal. However, there are one or two pleasant surprises.... 'Victory at Last' is actually a stormer, speed power with a dose of charisma and energy sorely lacking throughout the bulk of the album, and with high-ish vocals in the vein of, say, Steve Souza and spiffing guitar-interplay a la hey day Thrash. This would sound great down the rock club on full volume. The sort of thing that Xentrix would have wanted to do, but never managed. However, a couple of good songs do not a good album make.

Metallica 'Garage Inc'

(Vertigo)

I'm only surprised that Vertigo haven't done this sooner. This CD collects virtually all of Metallica's various studio-recorded b-sides from the past 15 years, and considering that they've had some blinding ones in that time (their covers of Budgie's 'Breadfan' and Diamond Head's 'The Prince' being the standouts), this is a damn fine package. Let's be honest, it's clearly an attempt by Vertigo to smother the lucrative bootleg market which flourishes in such stuff. But it makes a very real attempt to give you value for money. A second CD is packed with new covers, some poorly done (such as Discharge's 'Free Speech for the Dumb') but many excellent... check out the Mercyful Fate medley, 'Sabba Cadabra', 'It's Electric', and the rip roaring 'Whisky in the Jar'. The two songs which seem initially out of place on the disc, the Bob Seiger and Nick Cave tracks, do make sense when you consider that Hetfield's vocals in recent years have increasingly drawn from such morose influences. And, shock horror! No superfluous scary guy stencils, flight case packaging, and it won't cost you a year's wages to buy it.



Motörhead 'Everything Louder than Everyone Else'

(SPV)

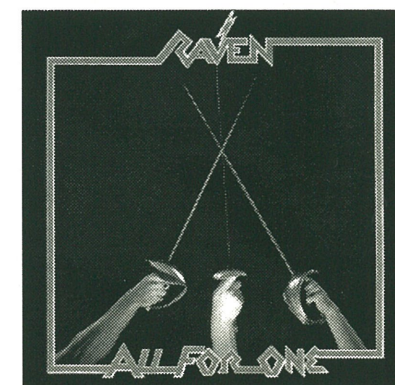
"Guten Abend! We are Motörhead... and we are going to kick some ass". So sayeth the colossus that is Sturmbannführer Ian Fraser Kilmister at the start of this mammoth feast of the mighty 'Head. Two hours of dirty love recorded at a Hamburg gig last year for your delectation. Anyone's whose been to one of their gigs will recognise the laidback banter between Phil and Lemmy, the understated Lemmy introductions, an almost surreal Heavy Metal Morecambe and Wise double act. The

songs? Highlights include 'Iron Fist', 'Sacrifice', 'No Class' (check out that riff nicked from ZZ Top's 'Tush!'), 'Civil War', 'The Chase is Better than the Catch' (aka 'The Face is Better than the Snatch'), and the ubiquitous 'Bomber'/'Ace of Spades'/'Overkill' closer. Of course, such is the sheer size of their back catalogue that its inevitable that someone's favourites are going to be absent (boo hoo, no 'Motörhead', 'Death or Glory' or 'Shine'). People will, I suppose, compare this live outing unfavourably to their 'No Sleep Till Hammersmith' album all those decades ago, but that's clearly a symptom of either snobbery or stupidity. I detest the received wisdom of the music press that 'Overkill', 'Ace of Spades' and 'No Sleep' are some kind of Holy Trinity beyond reproach, and that Motörhead have never been as good since 1981. Bollocks... 'Bomber' is the best ever, and latter day albums such as '1916', 'Bastards', and 'Overnight Sensation' are excellent. Rant, rant.

Ragnarok (UK) 'Domgeorn'

(Eldethorn)

An impressive album, with Deorb's vocals often sung in Saxon language. Like the Solstice album, this has a very clear English feel to it, not just through the vocals and lyrics, but also through the song structures... hell, they even cover the trad folk song 'John Barleycorn', giving it their own Blackish-metal twist for the second half. Yeah, it sounds like a hideous idea on paper, but it does work. Extreme Metal is evidenced throughout this album, with fast and furious songs resting snuggling betwixt the slower and more laid back arrangements. If you're into the likes of Skyclad, Waylander et al, then this is well worth checking out.



Raven 'Rock Until You Drop'/'Wiped Out'/'All for One'

(Neat re-issues)

The first three of the 4 albums recorded by Newcastle power trio Raven for Neat Records in the early 80's, these have been re-released with various bonus tracks to celebrate Neat's 20th anniversary. With a sound described by the band themselves as 'athletic rock', Raven's Metal was ahead of its time in that it lay down some of the clearest foundations for the Speed genre; indeed, it was Raven (and legendary promoter Johnny Zazula) who gave Metallica their first major 30-date US tour as support on 83's 'Kill 'Em All For One' package. Though all three albums are of interest, the best is undoubtedly '83s 'All For One'; with tracks like 'Hung, Drawn and Quartered', 'Seek and Destroy', 'Break The Chain', 'Take It Away' and the crazy 'All for One' (which its mad tempo

changes, breaks and with a bit of the French National anthem in there somewhere!), it's a high octane affair with John Gallagher's distinctive vocal range being used to great effect. Definitely worth getting hold of if you're in any way serious about charting the very best of Metal's history.

Saxon 'Metalhead'

(SPV)

I can see this getting shredded as a matter of editorial principle in the likes of Kerrang et al, but here at Fitted Kitchens towers there's always been a place for Saxon on the trusty deth deck. Unfortunately, this ain't no 'Strong Arm of the Law' or 'Denim n'Leather'... hell, its not even a 'Crusader'. There's one definite stand-out song on this album and that's 'All Guns Blazing', which is Very Heavy, Very Metal and Very Bad News. The title track 'Metalhead' isn't bad either, with its modern day Metal reference points, and 'Travellers of Time' is fine until the hideous chorus. But the rest of the album just plain sucks.



Scepter 'I'm going to Hell'

(Merciless)

'Pure Fucking Metal' from this Illinois three piece. Like Desaster's slab of steel, this is a homage to the eighties (their two previous offerings were entitled 'Up Thy Ass' and 'Metal Supremacy') which executes itself with an enormous amount of charisma and credibility. There's a slowed-down early Slayer vibe to much of this album, as evidenced by the geetar leads and Araya-esque howls on 'Obsessed By Metal' (what a title!) or the intro to 'Payback's a Bitch'. Sceptre lose points for their lyrics to 'Ready to Rape'... not through the dreaded disease of political correctness, but simply because its such a stupid fucking thing for them to have done... guys, what would your mums and sisters say about this crap? 'Predestination' clearly steals from Slayer's 'Postmortem' and Metallica's 'For whom the Bell Tolls'. Wimps and posers, go listen to yer Manowar records.

Six Feet Under 'Maximum Violence'

(Metal Blade)

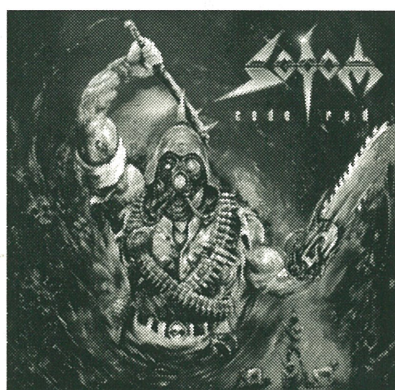
I've seen Six Foot Under live, and this CD is almost as dull. OK, there's a great US Death Metal vibe to this, their third outing, and its simplicity can indeed be refreshing, but for a whole album? C'mon guys, catch yourselves on. Like Warhammer, S.F.U (so fucking useless) have a song entitled 'This Graveyard Earth', but unlike Warhammer's, its crap. There's no reason to waste your time on this sort of vacuous drivel.

Skinlab 'Disembody: the New Flesh'
(Century Media)

Skinlab, the band who did their Metal apprenticeship in acts as diverse as Skrew, Defiance, and Laaz Rockit, have taken the novel approach of releasing two albums on the same CD. At least, that's how it sounds to this listener. Several songs (such as 'Know your Enemies', 'No Sympathy for the Devil', 'Breathe' and 'Excellerate') are distasteful to my ear, stinking as they do of the very worst of latter-day idiots Sepultura, what with down tuned guitars and Hard Core -style vocals. Unessential. However, the darker, more sinister side of Skinlab delivers the goods in songs such as 'Scapegoat', 'So far from the Truth', 'I name my Pain', and 'Looks can be Deceiving', which are deeper and much more convincing. This is the more mature Skinlab, which whilst continuing in the 90's vein, has the savvy to build beyond such faddish foundations and inject sufficient originality and charisma to carry it off.

Slavearc 'Structural Damage in the Blueprint of Humanity'
(Screams of Salvation)

Technical Death Metal from North England with fierce blasts and powerful vocals. The production, while of a high standard, avoids the common pitfall of technical Metal ie it isn't robbed of its punch and vigour. The lyrics are politicised and vitriolic, bringing to mind such acts as Napalm Death, or Birmingham crust-mongers Doom. Slavearc have disbanded since this release. Shame.



Sodom 'Code Red'
(Drakar)

Sodom have made one of the fastest heaviest albums ever created. Code red is the "Reign in Blood" Slayer never made and much more. Not a fucking keyboard in sight. No fake shit vocals. No badly played traditional instruments. No make up. Just metal the way it should be. Check out the rif on "What hell can create" other excellent moments are "code red" "spiritual demise" warlike conspiracy "book burning" and the curiously titled "visual buggery". Full credit to Harris Johns and Sodom on a superb full heavy as fuck sound. The most essential album of the year so far along with "the gathering". Death to false metal.JSSL

Solstice 'New Dark Age'
(Misanthropy)

Solstice have come up with a platter so seemingly ludicrous that it defies coherent description. On first listen to 'New Dark Age', I was utterly appalled at their complete lack of self-

consciousness, and sat squirming with embarrassment as they traipsed a merry-minstreling through a Metal cum medieval English folk music workout which made Skyklad look like a bunch of diehard death-heads. At one point, 'on 'Blackthorne', I could have sworn that these guys were about to break into a rendition of Simon and Garfunkel's 'Scarborough Fair', so baroque and outrageous the arrangement of the piece. A couple of songs before that, 'Hammer of Damnation', they had a guitar intro which sounded like Waylander playing an 'Animal Rights' era Moby song, or vice versa. However, once I'd turned the volume up, it made much more sense. It's generally been classed as a 'doom' album, but its much more than that. There's definitely a very British epic Heavy Metal feel to it (though in not the bombastic style of, say, Maiden or Bal Sagoth), what with the frequently military-style drumming, the excellent guitar leads and the heavy as fuck bass. Singer Moz is a star. Though very different to those displayed by previous vocalists, such as on the Halcyon EP, his crystal clear vocals are carried with a style entirely befitting Solstice. A major characteristic of this album is its sheer Englishness (an Albion Candlemass?), I don't know how else to describe it, and its complete disregard for trend and fashion makes it a shockingly fresh experience in a world of Metal increasingly pervaded by the superficial and the unconvincing. It definitely requires several spins before you get properly into it, always the sign of a challenging listen. Give it time, give it patience... give yourself into the Power of Awesome Metal.



Testament 'The Gathering'
(USG)

Christ on a cross, this is stunning. I've always known Testament as a second league thrash act who did several decent songs ('Into the Pit', 'Electric Crown', 'Disciples of the Watch') but mostly a lot of shite ones. But this is the fucking business. Following from the harsher feel introduced on 'Low', 'The Gathering' is one hell of an album. The songs most immediately mirroring the Testament of old, 'Down for Life' and '3 Days in Darkness' (with its Ozzy-esque groove) actually serve to show case how much testament have moved on in the second half of this decade. The reference points for the contemporary Testament sound are legion. 'Careful What You Wish For' has a Cathedral-cum-Sabbath undertow. 'Legions of the Death' has some of the brutal thrash ever to have been cast forth in recent years, made brutally effective by a painfully powerful death-metal vibe, with even a hint of say Deicide on occasion. 'Riding the Snake' has all the class of say Covenant but without the drivel. An album where

everything that is great about Heavy Fucking Metal is brought together and melded into a bone fide classic. A total masterpiece. Album of the year.

Therion 'Crowning of Alantis'
(Nuclear Blast)

A stop-gap until the Swedes' new album appears later this year, this platter is a mixed bag of live jobbies, covers and new material. The four new songs bode well, most particularly the trouser-tightening title song, and carry on in Therion's characteristic vein of symphonic Metal... strings, choral vocals. Excellent. The three live jobbies are of fine quality, but the three covers somewhat patchy (sure, Manowar's 'Thor' is deadly, but Accept and Loudness tracks? Hmm...). Delicious.

Thorr's Hammer 'Dommedagsnatt'
(Southern Lord)

The entire vibe cranked out by this US deathly-doom trio is just so cack-handed that I can barely bother to review it. Lifted from cassette and dumped onto CD, its flaws all too clearly show despite the limited benefits brought by '98s remastering. Regrettably, you get the sense that it'd still be crap even if they'd had a decent recording in the first place. Whilst the bird Runhild's vocals are tolerable, the various blokes' are mere death-by-numbers gore gurgles, not noteworthy in the slightest. The music itself is slow-speed deathly doom, and again nothing special. Dull, dull, dull. Which all means that this MCD is best described as a great big steaming pile of festering shite. You'll be chuffed to know that this is their only release, Thorr's Hammer having spilt in '95.

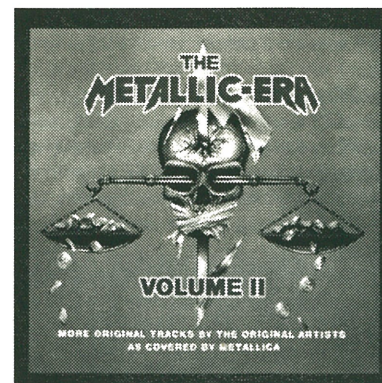
Warhammer 'Death Christ'
(Grind Media Syndicate/ Nuclear Blast)

Warhammer are clearly moving in the vein of classic Celtic Frost/ Hellhammer, and in this sense 'Death Christ' is both a great listen and an admirable achievement. You want Tommy W death grunts? 'Oooh', you got 'em, baby! Opener 'This Graveyard Earth' has the 'Enter the Crypt of Rays' vibe down to a tee, and 'Deathchrist' is a pretty sick rot n'roller, There's also an element of anarcho-punx Rudimentary Peni on occasion, say at the opening of 'Capacity of Tragedy'. Admittedly, they do overlap the 'hammer/ Frost vibe over the course of the ten songs, and what intially titillates can too easily become tedious. Not the sort of album you'd want to digest in one sitting, but spiffing stuff in moderation.

Various artists 'Contains No Holy Additives' vol.3
(Godreah zine/ Eldethorn)

The third of the Godreah zine compiled underground feasts. Opening, appropriately enough, with the compellingly ludicrous Meads of Asphodel, this CD flies the flag of hate for all manner of extreme British Metal. This series is an excellent source for those wishing to delve below the corporate 'underground', as it takes you by the tit and leads you through all manner of weird shit (from the pagan English Metal of Ragnarok, via the immense decay of Welsh gigs Desecration, to the infectious cyber Metal of Scotland's Chaos:sphere). Previous compilations, by the way, have included tracks from 'Norn Irn' based bands such as Scald and Ep-

och. An essential gift for the lazy bastard Metallor in yer life who hasn't the motivation to his/ her own sniffing around the underground.



Various artists 'Metallic-era Vol. 2'
(Neat)

Whereas volume one confined itself to bringing together the original versions of the majority of the Metal songs covered and recorded by Metallica over the years (on b-sides and EPs), this volume gathers together the original versions of several of the songs covered by Metallica on their recent Garage Inc outing. As such, it's a pretty eclectic affair, with Lynyrd Skynyrd and Nick Cave rubbing shoulders with Motorhead, Mercyful Fate and Diamond Head. This means that most of the original material on this CD isn't difficult to find elsewhere, which makes it less a Metal gem than a tenuous cash in. That said, Jess has spiced up the package by adding a couple of original tracks by Savage and Jaguar that Metallica have admitted ripping off riff-wise etc. It'll be interesting to see if Neat can wring a third album from the Metallica connection!

Various artists 'Presumed Guilty'
(Misanthropy)

An excellent compilation from the now-defunct Misanthropy label, worked around the theme of freedom of expression. Readers will be aware that this label achieved notoriety on the back of a couple of its signings, most notably 'Varg' Vikernes' Burzum, and got involved in/ drawn into the ever sensitive twin issues of extremist far-right politics and censorship. The upshot of this was that many distributors refused to carry Misanthropy goods, but the counterflip to this (which Tiziana must surely have anticipated and exploited) was that adverse publicity is almost always good publicity in Metal land. Label head Tiziana makes an articulate (if manipulative and sensational) defence of Misanthropy's signings from a freedom of expression context, and the bands are invited to do likewise, though with wildly fluctuating degrees of intelligence (from the mental dexterity of Dream Into Dust via the arrogance of Primordial to the convoluted idiocy of Burzum). But I remain unconvinced that Misanthropy should expect to be permitted to wash their hands of what was essentially a market-orientated cash-in (based on the back of Varg's extremely distasteful personal politics) which back-fired and plead innocence and persecution. Enough conjecture... what of the songs? Well, highpoints include Dream Into Dust's 'Stormbringer', a rough and ready mix of Solstice's 'The Sleeping Tyrant', Beyond Dawn's 'Need', Burzum's 'Et Hvitt Lys Over Skogen' and Aphrodisiac's inspired 'Lux Et Tenebrae'. Well worth getting hold of for the music, or tape

it from someone if you don't fancy giving the label yer cash.

Various artists 'Thrashing Holocaust'
(Necropolis)

Neeaaarrghhhhhh! Nineteen bands playing nineteen songs of venom'n'leather fueled BlakkThrashAttak. I recognise most of the names like Desaster, Witchery, Absu, Metal Lucifer and Sabbath (well, hey, the last two are basically the same people anyway), but many are new to me (like, who the hell are Satanic Slaughter or Lordes Werre?). As with any compilation, the quality varies considerably, and only a handful of songs will be played again and again on the Fitted Kitchens deth deck (Metalucifer's 'Headbanging' RULES!), but hey, Necropolis have just created the perfect party record...as background frashing mayhem, this would be an excellent choice. Invest in this, my pretty ones, and bask in the sonic filth and fury. Oh and by the way... FUCK OFF!!!

Recommended Zines

We at FKOTLD or what ever arse we're called, have painstakingly researched, tested, and even read the following Zines. Those listed below are fit for your bloody vampyric consumption.

Ailleacht Na Dorcha, Paddy Byrne, 5 Patrick Street, Fermoy, County Cork, Ireland.

Deprived, Brian Taube, Main Street, Roundwood, County Wicklow, Ireland.

Diuth cheangal fuil ('Bond of Blood'), c/o Alan Averill, 95 St Declan's Rd, Marino, Dublin 3, Republic of Ireland.

Firefight, Mike Exley, 31 William Close, Southall, Middlesex, UB2 4UP, England, UK.

Godreah, Crin, 33 Lilac Road, Hoddesdon, Herts, EN11 0PG, England, UK.

Intoxicated zine, PO Box 2581, Reading, Berks, RG1 7GT, England, UK.

Kentucky Fried Afterbirth, Grey, 141 Montague Road, Leytonstone, London, E11 3EW, England, UK.

Megin Giord, c/o Gavin Parkinson, 31 Westfield Drive, Lightcliffe, Halifax, West Yorkshire, England, HX3 8AW, UK

The Dead Sea, Nick Moberly, 125 Fairmile Lane, Cobham, Surrey, KT11 2BU, England, UK.

NEWS... and all that sort of stuff...

(continued from page 4)

The weird and wonderful world of James Fogarty moves ever onward. His **Ewigkeit** project has since spawned its second album, 'Starscape', released on Neat's sub-label Eldethorn and seems to be doing quite well. Besides this, James is also now drumming in another act, the name of which I have entirely managed to lose, it was written down on a scrap of paper, I know I saw it on this desk only a few minutes ago... shit, sorry about that, folks...

Scald, the brutal Belfast technical death-grind Metallors, have seen their deal with Metallion's Head Not Found label (Norway) fall through, and they ain't happy bunnies. Maybe this accounts for the fact that their new material, which Fitted Kitchens was treated to at a recent practice session, is faster and even more brutal than previous fayre... newies 'Meat' and 'Recess' will definitely separate the maniacs from the poseurs. Paul and Mick will hate me for saying this but, yes, there is a few-seconds bit in one of the new songs were Iron Maiden springs to mind. The band will be recording their new material at Giro's studio, Belfast, in September and they'll be using some of this as promo material to fire out to various labels etc. Scald will be doing a split CD with Belgium's Shiver Records sometime soon (other band tbc), the label who have put out several 'Sometimes Death is Better' underground compilation albums over the years. Meanwhile, Metallion has given up Head Not Found (Voices of Wonder will continue to distribute some of HNF's concerns) and he's concentrating on his Slayer zine and planning to launch new label 'Metallion 666'.

London-based Death Metallors **Suffering** are still pedalling their Deathly wares, though vocalist Grey admits that he's suffering himself from ever-increasing apathy with the entire thing. Still, little surprise when you consider that this guy has just recently published issue 5 of his underground zine, 'Kentucky Fried Afterbirth' and continues to organise periodic Club Braindead events... as our old mate Dave M sang on 'Sweating Bullets' "mankind has got to know his limitations".

Colchester Me(n)tallers **Entwined** have left Earache, and are shopping around for a new deal. In the meantime, they've released a demo recorded by Simon Efery for your delectation (though which has yet to materialise in my PO Box). Readers of Terrorizer zine may be surprised to learn that the erstwhile Steve Tipton was in fact a pseudonym for Steev Tovey, the Entwined frontman. So now you know.

Finally, fuck knows what's going on in the world of Byron's **Bal-Sagoth**... the lazy buggar never got back to me. All I know is that they've moved from Cacophonous to Nuclear Blast... and, um, that's about it.

Mourning Beloveth

If you're any way serious about yer Doom, you'll surely have heard of Ireland's Mourning Beloveth. Whilst certainly not the most prolific of bands in terms of their output (2 demos in seven years, the idle wasters), they've been steadily building an excellent name for themselves through their own unique brand of relentless and epic melancholy. Fitted Kitchens caught bassist Aido one fine summer's eve to find out a little more about these masters of despair. Methinks Aido was seated at the foot of the Holy Bong when he wrote these answers...

'bout ye, Aido. Tell us the history of Mourning Beloveth in less than 100 words. Go! I believe that there has been a recent line-up change so tell us all about this, and throw in a couple of mirthful anecdotes to spice it up.

"OK, the current line up of Mourning Beloveth is Darren (vocals), Frank (guitar), Tim (drums) and myself (bass). Brian (guitar- Ed) left due to personal problems a few months back. The first demo (untitled) was recorded in April '98 and has sold 400+ with the new demo, 'Autumnal Fires' passing the 700 stage now. Hypnotic riffs, heavy, deep distorted guitar, rumbling bass, slow drums and a guttural voice with some clear pieces too: that all creates the raw, melancholic doom that MB have made their own. Funny stuff? Hmm... I remember myself and Darren checking out printers to do the inlays and we went



Come on lads, give us a smile

into one place and the woman asked us for an example of what we would like the inlay to be, and from his pocket Darren produced this inlay from some demo band who had a foetus on the cover and it was a bit graphic, I just laughed and ran"

1998's 'Autumnal Fires': forty-five minutes of claustrophobic doom. It ain't easy listening, definitely a case of needing to be in the right frame of mind or else it is oppressive listening. When will Mourning Beloveth be getting lawsuits filed by the parents of fucked up teenage suicides? Did the music make them do it?!

"That's another good description of our stuff. I suppose it is a bit hard to listen to and it helps to be in the right frame of mind. You have to know what to expect, as we have found out at some gigs. When we supported Cathedral, some idiot was shouting 'play a fast song'; maybe he was getting depressed listening to us, which is good, what better compliment could you get? We're not the type of band to for slamming or

vicious headbanging to, people usually stand around and might sway a little, get a little paranoid and suicidal heh heh. I don't think we would cause any suicides but it would be cool if we did, for a demo band anyway... become a cult and then break up! Mass suicide, heh heh. It would be nice to see if any people who listen to our stuff get death shivers like I do sometimes when we play."

MB's music has been labelled 'raw melancholic doom' which hits the nail squarely on the head I'd say. There's no concession to the listener with attention deficit disorder, and MB positively revel in producing genuine grief-filled soundscapes. Give us your thoughts on your lyric matter provided by vocalist Darren. In fact, tell us the basis behind the three masterpieces on the latest demo.

"The new demo is a trilogy based on the pain, grief, loss and murder of beauty which we experience in our lives. The lyrics deal with images of nature and carries an atmosphere of darkness and sorrow. When Darren writes the lyrics he mightn't know what the song is about until there is music behind them, which adds to the mystery of MB. "When grief wrapped its cold arms around my body the embers still flickered in the Autumn of your love" (Autumn Fire in Somnolent Harmony), "Your poison takes my life, the emerald has now turned to stone, our castles now overgrown". See what I mean? Darren prefers to let the listener get his/her own personal meaning from our songs, which in turn adds to the feeling of Mourning Beloveth"

Labelling yourselves as 'doom' as you do on your website and demo inlays could lose you potential listeners who may be put off by their own preconceptions of the genre. What do you think?

"Well, it wasn't the intention at the beginning to 'label' ourselves as a Doom band. We did avoid it for as long as possible, but as it worked out we are reaching a lot of different audiences; I've seen Goths, Thrashers and other freaks giving nods of approval at our gigs and buying our demos and t-shirts. I think it could be the way our music touches whatever depressing nerves we all possess, and this is good. It doesn't limit us to any particular scene but I would say we strongly remain a part of the Doom genre"

Given the fact that Mourning Beloveth have been around since '92, but have only managed to gloom your way through two demos, it seems you're not exactly pushing yourselves. This suggests that you're a bunch of pot-addled heads. Fair comment?

Also, with a spate of local acts being signed recently (Waylander, Geasa, Abaddon Incarnate etc), are MB likely to miss the boat? Is getting signed even that important?

"I'm not going to make any pathetic excuses about why we are slow at putting out demos, but there was a difficulty in trying to establish a stable line-up for a while and it had its effects on the band. We do take the odd toke or two but that's just us, and if it affects our productivity it's our fault. I hope we don't 'miss the boat' as you say, in so far as getting signed... it would be nice to get something professional out and be on a par with our mates who are getting off the ground, because I believe that Ireland is going to get a lot of notice and attention Metal-wise pretty soon. This country has a lot of good bands and I can honestly say there aren't many or any shit bands out there; a few dicheads, alright, but that keeps a good balance I suppose. MB knows that the music we play is not too popular so we know the possibilities of being/ not being signed"

Any scene will have its in-fighting and ego-clashes. How do you see these tensions manifesting themselves in the Irish scene?

"You're right there. Of course there are ego clashes and ridiculous in-fighting in this scene as much as any other scene but those assholes thrive on shit like that and I don't like to get involved... that would make me as bad as them, so I mainly avoid those situations if I can. I know some of those people and I like to take the piss out of them unawares. They will be lonely old men in years to come, so fuck 'em. As long as we don't start killing each other, like those crazy Norwegians, we will do alright. The Irish scene is still small, but is growing very quickly and it



Masters of Doom... by Doom be mastered

would be a shame at this stage to let the assholes mess things up. The best thing is not to listen to them."

A little birdie told me that you went down like a sack of shit at your last Belfast gig. What was the story? Indeed, playing music as slow as you do, it's difficult to motivate an audience to participate in the whole thing.

"That little birdie was probably wearing a Korn t-shirt and swigging stake tit-juice or else he doesn't appreciate slow music. If you read the ONLY live review that we have on our web page, you would see that it is quite a favourable review and we seem to have gone down better than any of the other bands that played (Abaddon Incarnate, Waylander), and I didn't think they were shit either. And I quote... 'First band on were Mourning Beloveth who wallow in doomful, gothic Sabbathesque riffs played with mantra-like repetition. Singer Darren has vocal growls that could have been used in 'The Exorcist', so much so that I nearly expected to see him spewing green puke and spinning his head around. They played material from their 'Autumnal fires' demo which was good in a depressing sort of way. Check out these guys if the contents of your wardrobe is exclusively black and your house is illuminated by candles...'. I didn't honestly feel that we went down like a sack of shit at all. We thought, and others said to us, that it was one of the best gigs we had played. So tell that bird to jump to a higher branch and get the full picture, maybe he's one of those fiends mentioned in the previous question. That gig was also the last that Brian played with us, so that was a bit special."

Poppyhill Studio in Kildare, despite the decidedly dodgy name, is getting a good reputation as a recording venue for all things Metal... recent clients have included your good selves, Arcane Sun, Moonfog and Thy Sinister Bloom I do believe. Would you recommend it to anyone else?

"I would recommend it to any good Metal band that has it together enough to go and record some stuff. Bands might be afraid that the production achieved might eventually become similar for all bands that would do stuff there, but that isn't so. You'll get a great sound at Poppyhill, the engineers are very good. Willie, the guy that owns the studio, has great insight into the stuff you give him but the other guy Graham, he did our demo, is a Metaller himself and if you can describe to him what you want in a song, or a particular sound on something, then he's the man for the job. It's a purpose-built 24-track studio, good equipment, great live rooms and compatible to any type of music really, as a good studio should be. If there are any foreign bands or labels reading this, it would be worth the effort to check it out. I'm going back there again in September to record a demo with another band I'm in, Kingdom (Black/Death/Doom)".

After a hard day's graft at work, what's the best selection of audio pleasures to clear your head and spark you up for an evening of doomy deviance?

"After a hard day's work, and I do many, I would hold off the Doom until later on. When I get home I might put on some At The Gates or Dimmu Borgir, Death, Borknagar, a lot of fast and nasty stuff brimming with Satanic or Evil intent, just to calm me down for a while. Later on, after a feast of mashed giblets and worm juice topped off with a smoke or ten, I will put on something else like Anathema, Black Sabbath, Pink Floyd, The Doors or some laid back background music. I listen to a lot of different types of music, not necessarily all of it Metal, so most of the time I could put anything on as my house mates past and present would vouch for."

Far from being the oft-maligned cause of despair violence and all things downright nasty, Metal is actually an extremely powerful vibe for chilling to and working out your frustrations with every-day drudge and irritation. Discuss.

"It's the emotion that you get out of a particular song or part of a song that gets you on that vibe, and because so many emotions can be found in different styles you can find music to suit. You know the sort of day where you feel you might want to kill someone? Well, I'd put on something like Dissection or Mayhem if I wanted to plan his/her murder and get the creative side going, or put on My Dying Bride, Black Sabbath or something soft as a distraction. 'Music calms the savage beast'. It's a pity though, when you see kids in court being blamed for a murder that was 'apparently incited' by listening to some form of extreme Metal. Metal is a very powerful vibe indeed and there are some who just can't handle it, and this has its ramifications; schoolyard assassinations, suicides etc."

Tell us about your favourite thing that you've stolen from a clothes line.

"I stole the whole clothes line once. I needed the rope to carry out a girlfriend's sexual fantasy (not mine... really). She put on a rubber catsuit that was five times too big for her, filled it up with plastic balls and warm water and then I suspended her from a tree. Then I opened the neck of the suit and slid in. After an hour of bang-bang-sticky-nicey, I ripped the crotch out of the suit and we both went for a bath of red wine and blood-sucking leeches"

What can we expect next from MB?

"We plan to record around December or soon after, two new songs and one piano piece; the plan is to release it as a seven inch or mini-CD. That's all for now. We are still trying to finalise our second guitarist to capture the fullness and heaviness that we have live".

Cheers for the interview, Aido... close off as you see fit...

"Thanks Spandex for the interview, I hope yer mag gets bigger and better and that the next time we meet in the Kitchen to prepare saucy giblets I can give you our debut full-length CD. Doom on, brother".

Mourning Beloveth are Adrian Butler (bass), Darren Moore (vocals), Frank Brennan (vocals and guitar) and Timmy Johnson (drums).

Ailleacht Na Dorcha

EPOCH **DEAD**

SATURNUS **BETHLEHEM** **SCALD WORLD**

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Skinlab hail from San Francisco's Bay Area, a location famed for its contribution to the global Thrash scene back in the mid to late 80's... bands like Exodus, Laaz Rockit, Heathen, Possessed, Forbidden set the standards for an entire new generation of bands to live up to. Appropriately enough, Skinlab have carried the Thrash torch in the late 90's and have melded the best of Thrash's power and excitement with some well-grounded latter day Metal savvy. Rest assured, shit like Coal Chamber or Korn this ain't. Fitted Doochiekeys cornered mainman Steev in Belfast during his recent sojourn with Entombed

"It's really great" the man mountain enthuses when asked about the tour so far. "This is our first time here in Ireland. Last night was our first show, Dublin, which absolutely CRUSHED. We're on a mission to crush everybody and everyone in our path! We're doing a pretty good job of that so far, and making a lot of good friends along the way... it's not a competition, it's about art and relaying a little message between friends"

There's a fair bit of difference on this tour. You've got the Hardcore openers, and then the hairy-arsed Metallers at the end, so it's a pretty good package.

"Yeah, Medulla (Nocte-Ed) have just jumped back onto the tour, and it's a lot more heavier a package. Kill II This were on the tour earlier, and they're a bit different to the two of us. It's good to have Medulla back, they're crazy, pretty insane, man"

People may be unfamiliar with Skinlab, and write them off as just another 'pretend metal' act. Tell us, how METAL are you? Tell us about your influences when you were growing up, was it all studs n'spikes and denim n'leather and all that carry on?

"I was born into music, I mean I grew up with Spanish music, my mom's a Latin music promoter, and my Dad's a saxophone player, he used to be in Santana. So I was



A Defiant Steev, far right

raised in a musical environment, and always knew someday I was going to do it. I started off as a congo player in my dad's band, then I started playing drums, then I bought Merciful Fate's 'Melissa', 'Nun's have No Fun', Venom's 'Welcome to Hell', Exodus, y'know, and everything... being from the Bay area, they were obviously big influences on me. There wasn't much of the 'denim and leather' thing in the Bay Area, it was more like just denim, 'yeah', everyone had their cut-off jeans vests, man, and their tight-peg pants... we looked like Kreator... we all wanted to look like Mille!" he laughs. "It was cool. Times change, but I was actually in another band called Defiance, and I moved from San Jose to Oakland. They already had a contract with Roadrunner, and I played on their second album and went on to make a few records, then I eventually quit and went on to form Skinlab in '94 which is far better"

So, all the requisite influences that most bands aspire to are all present and correct! Give us an idea of what all you saw, you must be in your early 30's, right?

"Nah, 29!"

Really? Oops...

"Yeah, 1969... the summer of love... that's where I came from!"

So you sort of caught the tail end of the 'first' thrash boom... Heathen, Exodus et



Snake (photo: Mo Tormentor)

al?

"Yeah, well Defiance was actually part of that towards the end, 1989-92, but the first Bay Area scene was, yeah, Heathen, Laaz Rockit, our guitar player Scott used to be in that band, Exodus, Possessed. I was just a little kid reading Maximum Rock n'Roll, and I'd take the train up to all the bigger shows that were on, so I like to think I saw part of it"

JUST SAY NO, KIDS...

Just at this moment, Snake wanders in... looks confused, and shambles out again after a gentle word from Steev

"Snake's not doing interviews today... he fried on acid last night! Best leave him to sort it out..."

On to the new album. I'll be honest with you, I haven't heard either your debut 'Bound, Gagged and Blindfolded' or your 'Eyesore' EP, but with 'Disembody...' it sounds like two albums. You've got the more 'immediate'

stuff like 'Know You're Enemy' which is very anthem-like, but other stuff such as 'I Name My Pain' which is much more measured and bleaker. I prefer this latter style, it has more depth and presence, but what do you think comes over better in a live setting, indeed which style do you prefer?



Steev (photo: Mo Tormentor)

"The faster stuff... but we always force-feed people the slower stuff too, because that's where we started off. If you listen to our first record, we're a lot dirgier and more doomy. The reason why this album is faster and just a little more intense is that we like to feed off the energy of the crowd and once you see us tonight you'll realise why we do this. We become one with the crowd. Our live show is so intense, we really want to bring out the dynamics of the music and we're totally proud of this record, I mean, it's an amazing record that we've been able to accomplish in such a short time. It took us four years to write our first one, and the sophomore effort's always going to be the hardest one, but we've proved everybody wrong, so far everyone likes this record far more than the first, so we're happy. We've got Snake, our new guitar player, we've got Scott, y'know, we have people who want to be here, who want to work. To be in this band, you have to work"

So, the geetarists on the first album, they left during a tour?

"One said he absolutely had to leave, because he wanted to get married... they're gone, bye bye"

And yer man from Laaz Rockit, does he bring any thrashy bits to the Skinlab melting pot?

"Actually, I wouldn't say so. He's brought in more of the groovier stuff. He didn't write that much stuff in Laaz Rockit, he came in and filled in for 'Nothing Sacred' or whatever, and then when they broke up, he made the band 'Gack' out of the remnants, which eventually folded, and then he started his own band, Killing Culture, so, yeah, everyone brought in their own influences. But we all know what Skinlab had to consist of, there wasn't going to be, like, this 'Chasing Charlie' part in fucking Skinlab... we weren't going to

have, just cos Snake was in Skrew, industrial drums and shit. I mean, we're Skinlab, I know what we are, and I definitely have this focus of what I want this band to be like, so does Paul and so do these guys"

So you wear the trousers in the band?

"Yeah, as silly as it sounds, and as fun as it is sometimes, I'd have to say yeah. My main thing is the business side, I deal directly with the label and I'm usually the one to yell at everyone, or whatever"

The big bad bastard?

"Absolutely! And it sucks, but I've really tried hard on this, I mean, because being the lead singer, being the one that everyone wants to talk to, take pictures of, whatever, you have to stay down to reality and I've really learned how to do that on this tour. I want to make my guys feel good too, that's why I talk highly of them"

What really does your head in? People going 'Hey, you're Machine Head-ites, aren't you'?

"We don't care about, like, people saying I look like Max because I have dreads, or that we sound like Sepultura or Machine Head. We don't care, man. It's a compliment to us, we take it all in our stride. One thing I do hate though, is when it's" (adopts a stupid slacker voice) "like, so you know Machine Head, what are they like, are they really gangsters, does Rob really carry a machine gun in his back pocket?" All I can say is 'Probably! But we wouldn't have a record deal if it wasn't for Machine Head. We're very thankful to them. I'd give them my left nut if it wouldn't hurt so bad!"

IN BED WITH, ER, STEEV

So, give us an example of some really embarrassing stuff that you've gone through as a band. You've been very upbeat so far, let's hear something juicy.

"Umm, ha ha..."

Oh, come on,

"Hmm... When we first started out, our amps would blow up, usually Skinlab shows are so chaotic, so unpredictable. But usually it's Paul, our drummer. When he's gone, he's usually either getting robbed, getting ice cream, or just missing in action. There's not really that much crazy that goes on... we're pretty tame people, pretty much family men. We're here to do business, but you'll usually find us fucking drunk at the end of the bar"

So, three-quarters of you are settled men, yeah?

"Three of us have girlfriends, in fact, I'm married"

So that leaves all the rock n'roll action for one bloke?

"Ha ha! Scott! I think he's found someone though, we'll see!"

Skinlab are a high profile act now, with considerable media coverage. What's the best lie that you've heard about yourselves?

"We've just heard this story that our old guitarists are suing us for the rights of Skinlab and stuff, and we're like 'we don't own the rights, so how are you going to fucking sue?'. I don't know... people tell me stuff here and there, but I don't think there's anything wild or crazy. That sucks, huh?"

So, what next for Skinlab? You're away with Napalm Death in the States I do believe.

"Get home for three days, get to kiss my baby, and then we're gone, we go out for seven more weeks, then back for two, then we

do Dynamo, then back to the UK for two shows, and I'd like to get back to Ireland, that'd be great. Then we go home for two days and go out with Neurosis and Earth Crisis for seven weeks. And then, we go to Rob's house, we're going to make him take us out on tour with Machine Head, we're just going to pack our bags and show up at every show!"

THE DEVIL DOES FIND WORK FOR IDLE HANDS TO DO

How do you cope with the boredom that touring is infamous for?

"Sit around, get wired on coffee. When you first came in, I was like 'urrgghh', I'd been doing paperwork all day and writing notes for our manager etc. Drink more coffee, walk in circles"

So five years down the line you're all going to die from chronic kidney failure?

"Yeah! The whole thing about touring is 'hurry up' and 'wait'. We hurry to get there and when we get there, we wait around. But, the forty five minutes each night is the best part. It's worth the wait. We also smoke a lot of weed"

Ok, fancy asking yourself a question and answering it?

"Do you enjoy doing this, Steev?" "Yes, I do". No, seriously, this is the best thing in the world, man. Why do I do it? I dunno, ha ha!"

And a final message to the readers of this rag?

"Thanks for helping us out, hopefully people will come up and we'll have a drink. Enjoy the new record. We're not ones to say 'We're Skinlab, man, you fucking take our stuff'. If you like it, you like it. If you wanna come down and hang out, it's cool. We're normal, ha ha! Cheers! Cheerio!"

Skinlab are Steev (bass/ vocals), Scott (guitar), Snake (guitar) and Paul (drums).

LIVE SONIC ATTACK!

NEW MODEL ARMY, The Empire Music Hall, Belfast, 4/2/99

NMA in FKOTLD? Hang about, this ain't Metal, what's going on here? Well, I've always had a bit of a thing for NMA, with 'Thunder and Consolation' being of my favourite albums, but this was a band I'd never seen... not live, not on TV, not even in 'live' photos. As such, this gig was something of an unknown quantity. The venue itself isn't a bad place, but there was a distinct lack of atmosphere during the gig, or perhaps that was just because I couldn't drink that night. The band themselves? Not a pair of clogs between 'em, and they looked horribly like a bunch of straight-edge hardcore kids, and displayed a distressing penchant for coming across like Three Colours Red or something like that. A visual letdown for the likes of myself who enjoys a healthy serving of Heavy Metal theatre. But the most annoying aspect was the band's crustie-identikit crowd who had been following them religiously on their tour. How fucking disappointing to play to the same bunch of wankers each night. However, the songs themselves were excellent, including such goodies as 'Stupid questions', 'Inheritance', 'Ballad of Bodmin Pill',

'51st State', 'No Rest', 'Ambition' and of course, 'Vengeance'. Failure to have played this eternal crowd-pleaser would be like Slayer forgetting to do Angel of Death. Nicely dedicated to our delightful paramilitaries, it was a fitting close for a Belfast gig. Good set list, shame about everything else.

Medulla Nocte/ Skinlab/ ENTOMBED, The Limelight, Belfast, 28/3/99

Medulla Nocte, notable for their rather portly drummer (a mere 28 stones) were the magnet for the hardcore kids tonight. They made a loud enough racket, but ultimately not METAL enough to appease us warriors of the rock apocalypse. Get some groove and colour guys. Skinlab's 'hey, yo, fuckin' fuck' banter is a bit embarrassing, but that's how most US Metal seems to act these days. With a good mix of pace and delivery, they inspired a couple of loons to perform some particularly scary acts of stage diving. Crash helmets, sirs? With their now-obligatory 'Star Wars' intro tape, the motley Entombed crew shamble on stage in various degrees of black, drain their beers and let it rip. The heat gets pretty oppressive in this venue and soon LG and Uffe are sporting their bare torsos which believe me is not a pretty sight. Check out LG's arse-rim. Alex is the totty for the gurls present and bassist Jorgen (with 666 shaved into his barnet) is a star... looking all the world like a wild battle-crazed submarine commander from Das Boot, he constantly throws devil-signs and pulls all the rite bass player moves, a bastard mix of Steve Harris and Phil Lynott. It's somebody's birthday, and hence the band pause to receive a tray of celebratory tippie and toast both the birthday boy and the Belfast 'bangers. True gents or what?

PARADISE LOST, The Limelight, Belfast, 8/4/99

This gig had all the portents for being a laughable disaster... no support act, a sparse crowd compared with the Entombed gig several days previous, a lead guitarist out of action due to a broken arm, a short set and, as Nick admitted in an interview for FKOTLD earlier in the day, hardly any old material. In effect, PL's gig tonight, being one of three on their Ireland-only tour, was a showcase for material from the new album which was scheduled for release two months down the line. Given Greg's post-Cork accident, they had considered pulling the Belfast and Dublin gigs. Fortunately, in stepped Andy aka drum roadie, who freely admitted that he was 'shitting himself'. He dealt with his new role admirably and aside from a couple of cock-ups, did the job. Over half the setlist was new material which clearly follows on from where their last album left off. Guys and gals, if you expecting another Shades of God or even Draconian Times, you ain't going to get it. The new stuff, importantly, IS good, and its no doubt encouraging for these Northern masters of mirth to see 'One Second' stuff being received as classics. Delving into the past is always a wise thing to do in gig land, and we were served 'Enchantment', 'Forever Failure' and 'As I Die', in which Nick managed to insert the line 'Can't you see, I'm a twat' in the closing verse. Jolly good.